OUR GOODLY HERITAGE

by Arch Merrill

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OUR GOODLY HERITAGE, ARCH MERRILL'S fifteenth regional book, is written in the lively, distinctive style that has made the author Western New York's favorite storyteller. It is a warm and folksy book. Yet as its title implies, its general theme is a serious one—a region's heritage.

To Arch Merrill Western New York's heritage embraces many things—the freedoms our forefathers won and the natural charm and fertility of the land they cleared, along with the region's history, legends, lore, traditions and folkways.

In this book are stories of the pioneers, of the Indians they displaced, of wars and warriors, with several chapters on Civil War lore. The veteran Rochester newspaper man has caught the spirit and the flavor of the region. He writes with fine familiarity of urban and rural landmarks, of county fairs, of county seat feuds, of village Main Streets, of picturesque places and personalities. Running like a golden thread through every page

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OUR GOODLY HERITAGE

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By ARCH MERRILL

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OUR GOODLY HERITAGE

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Chapter 1

Our Heritage Is Many Things

"The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." Psalms 16:6.

To those words of the Psalmist every Western New Yorker can say a sincere "Amen." Ours indeed is a goodly heritage and the lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places.

This heritage of ours is so many things. It is the freedoms our forefathers won for us through great travail. It is the land they cleared for us, a land of rare physical charm and great fertility. Part of our inheritance is a challenging climate which breeds a hardy people.

We have a dramatic heritage of history—from the time of the Indian war canoes to the current era of the jet planes tearing across the skies. And there are the legends and the folk tales, along with our traditions, our landmarks, our folkways.

For nearly 20 years I have been following the lore paths, "exploring" this region, which for want of a better name, we call "the Rochester area." The way has led to pleasant places, whether in the old mill town of Rochester, with a river in its heart and lilacs on its hills, or its many-sided,

legend-haunted countryside. Every Sunday I have reported my "findings" in the Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle.* Some of these reports have been put between the pages of this book.

And for my generation, perhaps no inheritance is richer than our memories, memories of a less troubled, simpler time.

Chapter 2

"No Easy Acquisition"

"Well may it be said that our rich inheritance, this now smiling region of cities, villages and broad and cultivated fields—it has been no easy acquisition."

Those words are taken from a book published by Orsamus Turner in 1852, the *History of the Pioneer Settlement of the Phelps and Gorham Purchase.* That purchase embraced this Genesee Country, this fertile and prosperous region we call the Rochester area today.

Here is the saga, in capsule form, of the stout-hearted pioneers, as Turner wrote it so long ago:

"No new region of our country has been settled by a class of emigrants as poor in the aggregate as were the pioneers of the Genesee Country. . . . The great bulk of them had but little left when they planted themselves in the forest and erected their rude cabins.

"They had just entered upon a long series of difficulties and hindrances. Disease and apprehension of Indian wars came upon them in the years of extreme weakness . . . when lands that had been cleared began to yield a surplus there was no market. Their wheat moulded in the stack and in the bark-covered log barns or when threshed and drawn over

long woods roads, even at a low price could not be exchanged for many of the common necessities of life.

"When the Genesee Country had just begun to realize something of prosperity, war (that of 1812) struck upon its immediate borders in its weak and exposed condition. The war closed—the year 1815 was employed in recovering from its effects. All of Western New York presented a sad picture—neglected fields, unrepaired roads and bridges. There was the far greater calamity, the loss in battle and from disease of many heads of families.

"Just as the country was recovering its lost ground, in 1816 June frosts almost destroyed the Summer crops. . . . In many instances the occupants of the cabins in the wilderness subsisted for months on wild roots, herbs and milk."

To obtain the material for his book, Turner talked with the pioneers themselves and with their sons and daughters. Out of his often stodgy prose these truths emerged:

No magic wand was waved to clear the dark woods and the dismal swamps. Freedoms were not won by executive decree. The pioneers who never knew freedom from want or fear won for their descendants a measure of those treasures through blood, sweat, tears and toil—plus self reliance.

From the pioneers' own words, as Turner and other historians set them down, we realize that "our rich inheritance was no easy acquisition."

There was Amos Richards who in 1801 settled at Sodus near Lake Ontario, "made a little opening in the woods, then sickened and died, leaving his widow and a 12-year-old daughter, remote from neighbors, alone on the wild lands. The mother and daughter chopped and cleared the land with their own hands, built a log barn where they lived with

their live stock, planted an orchard, plowed, harrowed, sowed and reaped."

Here are the words of Lansing Bailey, a pioneer who settled near Albion in the war year of 1812:

"After the first of August, 1813, my brother was taken with fever and ague. Someone told him of a remedy. He tried it, a violent fever ensued which lasted but a few days and he died August 8. Before my brother was buried, my wife was taken with the same fever and died on the 13th. They were in succession taken by friends to the burying ground in Gaines. Some friends living on the Ridge took my children home with them while I returned to the desolate home to spend one of the loneliest nights I ever knew."

Other shades come out of the past to add their testimony, sometimes in stilted old fashioned phrases but eloquent nonetheless.

For example James Sperry, whose father settled in Bloomfield in 1794, recalled in his reminiscences that:

"Settlers often had to go without meat and sometimes without bread. Children had to go on horseback to the grist mill 15 to 20 miles. My eldest brother and I walked two and one half miles across the snow through the openings to school, with rags tied on our feet, taking them off during school hours."

And Mrs. Farnum of Honeoye Falls remembered very well that: "When deaths occurred in our family, no seasoned boards could be obtained for coffins, short of taking down a partition of our log house."

Those pioneer mothers who left their comfortable homes in trim New England for the "great Western Wilderness," displayed a Spartan courage that is a bright page in the story of the frontier.

They "plodded through snow and mud days and weeks, with stinted means, with families of young children, some of them died on the way and were buried in the forest; they spread their cots on the ground, their slumbers often interrupted by the howl of the gaunt wolf prowling around their camp fires. They prepared frugal meals by winter camp fires and kept nursery vigils by the driving snow."

They brought their religion with them into the wilds, for it is recorded of a band who came to York in 1804 that "they kindled a large fire to keep them warm and to scare away the wild beasts and when night came, they sang the songs they had heard on the hillsides of their native Scotland, their voices echoing in the dark forest."

And there was cruel loneliness. Roswell Atchinson, whose parents pioneered at Braddock's Bay in 1796, wrote that "I have heard my mother say she lived eight months without seeing another white woman."

When the Scots came to the Caledonia region in 1799, they had no domestic animals of their own, in fact they had little but the clothes upon their backs, yet pioneer John McNaughton remembered that they managed the team work by "selling some of our clothes that we could spare to settlers on the river for the occasional use of their oxen."

The following letter from Northumberland County, Pa., appeared in July, 1789, in the *Maryland Journal:*

"The people of the Genesee and Niagara country are starving to death. The wild roots and herbs that the country affords constitute the whole food of most unhappy people. Unless they get supplies from this and neighboring counties, they will be compelled to quit the place, as their crops have universally failed. Several boat loads of flour that were carried from here have been seized by force by the people."

The pioneers knew the rigors of invasion, too. After the British "blitz" of 1813 which brought the burning of Buffalo, Turner describes the flight from the war zone thus:

"The road from Willink to Turner's Corners in Sheldon (Wyoming County) presented one continuous column of retreating soldiers, men, women and children from Buffalo, families from the settlements in southern Erie County and the Indians enmasse from the Buffalo Reservation. An ox sled would come along bearing wounded soldiers . . . another with the family of a settler and a few household goods that had been hustled on it . . . then a litter, borne on men's shoulders, upon which reclined a wounded soldier or an infirm citizen; squads of women and children on foot, remnants of some dispersed corps of militia hugging the arms they had neglected to use and finally the Indians on foot and on ponies, the squaw with her papooses on her back and a bevy of juvenile Senecas in her train."

"It was a Winter of gloom and despondency. . . . Throughout all the back settlements there were half deserted neighborhoods, the solitary log house, no smoke rising from its stick chimney; cattle, swine and sheep hovering around and looking in vain for someone to deal out their accustomed food."

There was never freedom from fear on the frontier. There were the wild beasts to reckon with. Often the first wails of the new born would be lost in the unearthly howling of the wolves outside the cabin. Stealthy wildcats crouched in the trees. Black bears raided pig sties and sometimes mauled humans. Rattlesnakes crawled into homes, coiled and chanting their deadly music.

A Pioneer Festival in Rochester heard this hair-raising tale from the lips of Simon Pierson, a venerable pioneer:

"When my wife was lying ill of the fever and ague, my dog set up a tremendous howling and behold, a great rattlesnake was under the bed, which was soon dispatched but not until he had shown his musical talents. I do not blame the snake for our floor was made of split logs."

These have been random bits from the record of the stout-hearted who came before us into the land of the Genesee.

The bones of the pioneers long have been mingled with the earth they strove so hard to win.

There is no physical frontier now. No one wants to return to log cabins and wild herbs and ox carts but is it not part of our heritage to keep alive the flame of the pioneering spirit? That spirit knows no frontiers.

Lest we of the Genesee Country forget: "Our rich inheritance—it has been no easy acquisition."

Chapter 3

The Pioneers Did It Themselves

This Do-It-Yourself business isn't exactly new. The pioneers knew all about it.

The pioneers who settled this Genesee Country in the twilight of the 18th Century and after the dawn of the 19th were mostly of the Yankee breed. Some of them had been this way before—as soldiers under Sullivan in the War for Independence.

They had never forgotten the rich promise of this old Indian land they had despoiled—the wild grass so tall on the river bottoms that it hid a horse and rider from sight—the Indian corn and bean fields and orchards the soldiers had destroyed—the rushing streams which would turn mill wheels—the virgin forests of oak, pine, elm, hemlock, ash, basswood, walnut, chestnut, hickory, spruce and sugar maple —the slender lakes sparkling between the hills.

Many a settler came to the new land on foot and alone over rough trails worn down by many moccasined feet. He carried a knapsack, a rifle, an axe and very little money in his buckskin trousers.

Generally he came in the Spring, as soon as the snow had melted from the trails and he stopped at the land office in Canandaigua, Bath or Batavia to select his tract and to make his first small down payment on it.

He whistled "Yankee Doodle" as he marched toward the setting sun. He was young and strong in a strong, young land.

At his chosen site he built a rough temporary shanty. He made a little clearing in the woods. Slowly he reared the log house for the family that would come later on. He did all these things himself—without benefit of architect, contractor or landscape artist.

Of nights he lay on a bed of hemlock boughs in the shanty and listened to the howl of the wolves, the hoot of the owls and the scream of the wildcats in the thick, dark woods.

By Fall the log house was done. A small area was burned off and a larger section cleared and made ready for burning and planting in the Spring. The pioneers did those things themselves—without any bulldozers, tractors or electric saws.

Before the drifts blocked the trails again, the pioneer shouldered his rifle and went back home the way he had come. Home was some long-settled New England village with white churches, neat white houses with green blinds and picket fences and a grassy common, a bubbling stream and a millpond, a place where no wild animals were screaming in the night.

In the Spring the pioneer and his family—often it was the pioneer and his bride—would set out on the trail to the West, with a yoke of oxen hauling a canvas-covered wagon or maybe only a cart. They might be driving a cow or some sheep along.

In the wagon would be a few cooking utensils, a few simple articles of furniture, some keepsakes but no finery, for pioneers had to travel light. There would be some vegetable seeds, even some flower seeds, and a sprig from the lilac bush that grew around the door of the old home in New England.

Back at the frontier cabin—and the bride from New England bravely smiled away the tears at the first sight of its loneliness and crudeness—the pioneer planted his wheat and his corn.

He cut his wheat with a sickle, his grain with a cradle, his hay with a scythe. He threshed his grain by hand with a flail. He broke the tough, rooty soil with a bull plow with wrought iron share and wooden board. He made a three-cornered harrow from a tree crotch and drew it through the stumps for the first clearing.

After the harvest he ground his crop in a mortar, in a stump hollow or in the end of a log. Some of his grist he toted in the ox cart many miles to one of the few mills on the frontier. He built a lean-to to shelter his livestock in the Winter. The rest of the year they fed on the browse of the cleared land.

Such was the Do-It-Yourself pattern in the olden time.

No wonder the girl from New England had fought back the tears when she first saw her new home. It was built of logs, fastened together by notching the corners. There was only one room. The floor was of dirt. There was a fireplace in one end, its back made of stone, laid in mud instead of mortar.

Greased paper covered the two holes that served as windows. Cracks in the log sides of the cabin were chinked with mud. A blanket sufficed for a door.

Beds were made of poles inserted in holes bored in one end of the cabin. The other end was supported by a wooden block of the proper height. They called them "Genesee bedsteads."

In them many a pioneer wife bore her children without benefit of physician. Sometimes there was no neighbor

woman near and the rough hands of the pioneer husband, accustomed to the axe and the plow, had to do the best they could.

Sometimes the dread Genesee Fever struck and a plain pine box was lowered into a fresh grave in the clearing.

An interior decorator would not have thought much of the cabin's decor or furnishings. The chairs were planks split from basswood logs and hewn smooth on one side. Legs were inserted in holes bored by an auger. Tables were constructed the same way.

On rough shelves stood a few pieces of crockery and wooden bowls. Around the fireplace which also was the cook stove hung the pots, a frying pan and a tea kettle.

The one room of the pioneer home was lighted at night only by the fireplace's glow or by a rag dipped in a dish of coon oil or some other animal fat. The greased paper windows let in little sunlight by day.

In that common room stood the hand loom and the spinning wheel. The pioneer housewife spun the flax and bleached it. She made the family's clothes with her own hands. She got her dye from plants and bark. She made her own soap. Do-It-Yourself was no fad with her.

The pioneer's gun and fishing pole supplied most of the meat for the table and his land the rest of the fare. Johnny cake or corn bread was a frontier delicacy and tea and coffee a rare luxury.

In her dreams the pioneer wife saw again the neat white village, the green common, the mill pond and smelled the fragrance of New England lilacs in the Spring.

The second year in the backwoods was easier. The pioneer enlarged his clearing and fenced off a part of it for his cattle. The hole in the roof was supplanted by a stick chimney.

Glass replaced the greased paper in the windows. A plank door swung on hinges where a blanket had sufficed. A log barn took the place of the lean-to for the stock. A rail fence encircled the house and garden. Corn, potatoes and pumpkins grew amid the stumps.

And the little lilac sprig from the old home in New England was pushing bravely up through the wilderness earth.

In time more wagons came rumbling over trails that had been smoothed and widened. The brawling stream was bridged. Soon what had been a lonely cabin became part of a little settlement. The pioneers built a schoolhouse and a church, not a meeting house with a white steeple like those in New England, but one of logs.

The dark woods were thinned and the wolves slunk away. The swamps were drained and the Genesee Fever struck no more. Log buildings gave way to those of frame.

"Yankee Doodle" had taken firm root in the Genesee Country.

Perhaps this current Do-It-Yourself vogue will revive in this push-button age something of the self-reliant spirit of the pioneers who *had* to do everything themselves.

Chapter 4

The Indian League Worked

Washington—The bald eagle, symbol of the United States, served in the 15th Century as the symbol of the Iroquois Indians. The Iroquois Confederacy was made up of six nations whose units were distinguished by a particular animal totem. . . . Over all was the eagle, according to a recently published report by the Smithsonian Institution . . . the symbol of the Iroquois Confederacy was "the Great Tree of Peace" on the topmost branch of which perched the eagle, alert for any approaching foe.

Borrowing the symbol mentioned in the dispatch and discovered, rather belatedly, by the august Smithsonian, was not the only way in which the American Republic has emulated the ancient Indian Confederacy.

In the York State woods five centuries ago, probably before Columbus, a primitive people devised a central government in many ways like our Federal union of states. The children of the forest set up a "League of Nations"—one that worked.

Women of the Iroquois had the right to vote and a strong voice in government centuries before the Susan B. Anthony

Amendment became part of the law of the enlightened palefaces.

When an Indian boy reached the age of 12, he was placed in a group led by a wise elder who taught the lore of the forest. That was the Iroquois Boy Scout system.

There is no record of a Margaret Sanger in the annals of the Six Nations but they had their system of birth control or "planned parenthood." Births were planned at four-year intervals so that every young child would have its mother's undivided attention. Children were usually limited to three in a family.

We who live in this old Indian domain can thank the "savages" for tobacco, squash, corn, beans, peanuts, maple sugar and the game of lacrosse, as well as for the spread eagle on our national symbol. We repaid the Indians for all these gifts by taking their land away from them.

The achievement of the Iroquois in the realm of government seems at this distance almost incredible. Their confederation for more than two centuries survived tribal wars, foreign influences and the advance of border civilization. The great European powers, France and England, courted its favor.

The Indian League of Nations was founded upon the same idealistic vision of universal peace that many moons later animated the gallant and futile crusade of an American professor named Woodrow Wilson.

No man knows the exact year that the symbolic Tree of Peace with the eagle spreading its wings above it was raised on the shores of Onondaga Lake and the Iroquois Confederacy was born.

It is told in the mythology of the nations that the great Dekanawideh, the Moses of the tribes, came down from heaven

to hand the Great Law to his people through the young Hiawatha. Emissaries went out to all the Indian peoples that spoke the mother tongue, inviting them to join hands in a great league to end war.

In soaring rhetoric worthy of a Winston Churchill was couched the legendary speech of Dekanawideh to his apostles beside the inland lake:

"Go ye out among the hostile nations and show them this Constitution and proclaim to them the unchallengeable laws of peace."

Actually the Iroquois League was founded on the solid rock of practical self interest, almost of grim necessity.

Twenty thousand Iroquois, living between the Hudson and the Genesee, surrounded on all sides by 100,000 potential enemies, sought to bind together through a pledge of eternal peace the nations of their own racial stock.

Those peoples were the Hurons, to the North and West; the Andastes along the Susquehanna and mostly South of the present New York-Pennsylvania border; the Neuters in the Niagara country and the Eries, "the Cat People," beside the lake that bears their name.

Not one of them would join the league. In the end every one of them was either conquered or swallowed up by the mighty Iroquois.

To the symbolic Tree of Peace, to the capitol of the Confederacy, the Long House of elm bark beside Onondaga Lake where burned "The Fire That Never Dies," came only five nations. They were the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onondagas, the Cayugas and the Senecas. It was long afterward that the Tuscaroras, fugitives from the South and a lesser people, became the sixth nation.

Each of the original Five Nations was given a task. The

Senecas, most numerous and warlike of them all, were "The Keepers of the Western Door of the Long House." They guarded the gate through which invasion was most likely to come.

When the Revolutionary army of the Yankee general Sullivan devastated the Seneca heartland, it came by the Southern door along the Susquehanna and the Chemung. The drums and cannons of the invading white men ended the power and glory of the Six Nations and quenched the fire in the Long House forever.

The once powerful League of the Iroquois was much more than a military alliance. As that authority on New York Indians, Rochester's Lewis Henry Morgan, put it, "It made a people under one government, one system of institutions and one executive will."

Its governing body was a council of 50 civil chiefs or hereditary sachems, representing each nation and chosen by the women from the elite of the young men who were trained for government from childhood.

In the sachems resided executive, judicial and legislative functions. They had the right to declare war, to admit new states, to fix boundaries and provide for the common defense, powers vested in our Federal government today. There was no dictatorship in the Long House. Each nation, while recognizing the authority of the confederation, was guaranteed its sovereignty and each sachem was granted autonomy in local affairs.

The Great Law assured free speech, religious liberty, the right to bear arms and the security of each citizen in his person and property. Do the words have a familiar ring? Read the Bill of Rights of the American Constitution.

Only when the sachems sat at the council was there visi-

ble evidence of a central government. In the parliament of the Long House, which usually convened in the time of falling leaves, all affairs of state were settled publicly. There were no closed sessions in smoke-filled rooms in which a handful decided the destinies of thousands.

There was no gag rule, no cloture. Debate was unlimited and oratory rose to high repute in the Long House. All acts of the League council had to be ratified by unanimous vote.

The Iroquois gave no land titles but as long as an individual used and tilled pieces of land, his right to it was unquestioned. Inheritance was through the mother line. But ownership of real estate meant little to the Indians who were continually shifting their village sites. They never could understand the white man's passion for land—especially other people's land.

"The Romans of the West" had no policemen, no jails. They never needed them. They knew the unwritten tribal code and seldom violated it—until the white man came with his firewater to debauch the simple children of the forest.

The Indians were a primitive, untutored people. They were often cruel. They butchered, scalped and tortured their enemies. That was the only kind of warfare a forest people knew.

But they never dreamed of so terrible an instrument of mass destruction as an atomic bomb.

Be it ever remembered that in the beginning the symbol of the Iroquois League of Nations was the Tree of Peace. The war eagle at its top screamed only when the bright dream of peace faded out.

Chapter 5

Old Legends Never Die

No mythical headless horseman galloped through Western New York hollows. No Rip Van Winkle slept for 20 years in the Bristol Hills. But only because we had no Washington Irving to set down the tales. For this countryside is rich in legends.

This is old Indian country and the Indians felt its mystical quality. They wove picturesque folk tales about its great hills, its valleys, its rolling uplands, its lakes like fingers, its brawling streams, its tinkling waterfalls, its thundering cascades, its spring that caught fire. They peopled its glens and caverns with fabulous creatures and heard in them voices that were not of this world.

When the white men took over the old Indian land, they took over its legends, too. The settlers were mostly of the New England stock but Yankees are not so prosaic and unimaginative as they seem. They perpetuated the old Indian legends, embellished them and created some of their own. They handed them down through the generations until they became firmly woven into the tapestry of our traditions.

So even today phantom boatmen glide over moonlit waters. Mysterious drums throb out of watery depths. A sad voice chants a death song at some Lover's Leap. Spectral

hoofbeats echo along a lonely road and ghosts walk of night in long deserted places.

And there is the hill on which nothing ever grows. That is the barren mountain that towers above Canandaigua Lake, the legendary birthplace of the Seneca Nation. About it has ever clung the legend of the Serpent of Bare Hill.

That legend has several versions. This is one of them:

Long ago the Creator caused the earth to open and out of the side of a massive hill the ancestors of the Senecas came into being. For a time they lived in peace there. A boy of the tribe found a little snake in the woods. It was an unusual serpent for it had two heads. The boy took it home, made a pet of it and fed it the choicest deer meat. The thing grew to incredible size and its hunger knew no bounds. Its master could not obtain enough game for its voracious appetite. The people of the tribe came to fear it as a monster.

Finally the great serpent encircled the hill and barred the gate with its opened, double jaws so that none could escape. Driven by hunger, the people tried to get away and one by one, they were eaten by the monster. At last only a young warrior and his sister remained of all the People of the Hill.

One night the young brave had a vision. If he would fletch his arrows with his sister's hair, they would possess a fatal charm over the enemy. He followed his dream and shot his magic arrows straight into the serpent's heart. The reptile was mortally hurt and in agony writhed his way down Bare Hill, tearing out trees and flailing the earth until he finally slid into the lake.

As the snake rolled down the hill, he disgorged the skulls of the Senecas he had devoured. In the area have been found large rounded stones weirdly like human heads. And to this day nothing has ever grown in the path of the serpent down

old Bare Hill. Its somber peak stands out above the rich and fruitful Vine Valley.

* * *

Many legends of the Red Men hover about that wanton Finger Lake, turbulent old Seneca. Out of Seneca's vast depths sometimes comes a strange thundering like the boom of hidden cannon or the beating of a great drum.

A legend of the "Land of the Lake Guns" which has lived through the years is that of Agayentah, the spectral Seneca warrior. Of all the braves, none was so tall, so powerful, so skillful in the chase, so brave in battle as Agayentah. One sultry Summer's day he went hunting along the lake "that has no bottom." The "Lake Guns" were booming, as they always do before a storm, and the young warrior took shelter under a big elm tree on the shore.

Suddenly there descended a dazzling lightning shaft and an ear-splitting crash. Tree and Indian went down together and together they floated out upon the lake. And they say that Agayentah, also known as "the Wandering Jew" or "the Wandering Chief" still rides his funeral barge around and around the lake, but only in the deathlike silence that precedes a storm—before Heno, the God of Thunder, looses his fiery bolts.

Generations of Hobart College men have preserved the legend and adopted Agayentah as their own. In 1896, Malcolm Saunders Johnson, a student who later became an Episcopal clergyman and a historian-composer, wrote for the campus paper, *The Echo,* these lines:

"Often when the storm is coming
Sounds the voice of Agayentah.
Ever armed and on the warpath,

Roams his restless spirit ever
And his shout to battle calling
Echoes o'er the lake forever."

Now, when the men of Hobart face some especially critical test on the athletic field, they summon the spirit of Agayentah, the Seneca warrior, to lead them to victory.

• • •

Still the voice of Mona-sha-sha
The benighted tourist hears
Where the falls of Portage thunder,
And its roof Glen Iris rears.

Many an Indian legend clings to Letchworth State Park "where the falls of Portage thunder" in the Grand Canyon of the Genesee.

Long ago W. C. H. Hosmer, the Bard of Avon, N. Y., put the legend of Mona-sha-sha into rhyme. The verse quoted above is from his poem, "Voices of the Past," which he read at the last council fire in the old Seneca Council House in the park on Oct. 1, 1872.

The poet introduced the story in this fashion:

When came the moon, to hunter dear,
Jonindeh built his cabin near
Their boiling rapids, white with foam,
And brought with him his wife and child
To gladden, in the dreary wild,
His temporary home.

The region round was full of game,
But back each night Jonindeh came
With empty hands, though bow more true
No marksman of the nation drew.

As the days passed and the wild beasts and the forest birds continued to elude his arrows, the hunter's depression deepened and he believed that an Evil Spirit had cast its spell upon him. Morosely, he rebuffed all of his wife's attempts to cheer and console him.

Mona-sha-sha's heart was broken for she believed she had lost her husband's love and one night while he lay sleeping in the lodge, she lashed her baby to her back and crept into the woods. She reached the brink of a waterfall and from its hiding place she drew a light canoe. She paddled out into the moonlit current that grew ever swifter as it neared the cataract. The little boy clapped his hands in glee. Then Mona-sha-sha tossed her paddle aside and her frail craft shot like an arrow over the precipice and was lost in the maelstrom below.

When Jonindeh awoke from a troubled sleep, he listened in vain for his wife's morning song and the prattle of their babe. He searched the lodge. They were gone. He called and there was no answer. He rushed out and on the dewy grass he found Mona-sha-sha's footprints. They led him to the brink of the falls. There he found the canoe was missing.

Just then a white doe and fawn darted past him. "The spirits of the dead have passed, inviting me to follow," he cried, as he drew his hunting knife from his belt. He plunged the blade deep into his breast and staggering to the chasm, fell into the thunder water to join his wife and son.

It's far too sad a tale to be linked with such a beauty spot. But after all, it's only a legend.

* * *

The story of "The Silver Bullet" may be a legend. Maybe it really happened. You feel it did, when you hear Steuben

County Attorney James S. Drake tell it, for Jim Drake is a rare storyteller, as well as a diligent collector of local lore.

It was in the pioneering time that John Teeple lived in the Town of Wayne within sight of three sparkling lakes, Keuka, Lamoka and Waneta. He was a substantial man among the settlers and was supervisor of his town. He had a daughter, Polly, who was the apple of his eye.

One day in the year of 1809 when Polly was 16 years old, she was sent on an errand to a neighbor's house. She took her pet dog along. Their path led past the lonely cabin where the widow Slocum lived. The widow was an eccentric. Some said she was a witch. She had left the religious colony of Jemima Wilkinson, the Universal Friend, across Keuka Lake, to live by herself in the Town of Wayne.

Polly Teeple's dog howled long and lugubriously at the widow's cabin door. To the superstitious woman that howl was an omen of impending death. She came out of her cabin and, her voice quivering with rage as she pointed a long finger at Polly Teeple, she pronounced this curse on the hapless girl.

"Yes, I shall die—but you, Polly Teeple, shall never walk again."

Sure enough the girl sickened and took to her bed. She seemed to be paralyzed. John Teeple called in the best doctors but they could do nothing. Finally he consulted a clairvoyant and she told him how to break the curse:

"Make an image of the widow Slocum in bread dough, then stand it against a basswood tree and at 125 feet pierce it with a silver bullet."

The dough image was made and Zenas Sackett molded the silver bullet and fired it at the required distance while

more than 100 settlers, among them some of John Teeple's fellow supervisors, watched.

Zenas Sackett's aim was good. The silver bullet hit its mark. Then Polly Teeple rose from her bed and walked again.

That night they found the widow Slocum in the woods. Her body was hanging from the limb of a basswood tree.

* * *

Rochester's Sam Patch has leaped into the stream of national folklore. One of the chapters in a book, *Upstate, Downstate, Folk Stories of the Middle Atlantic States,* by M. (for Moritz) Jagendorf, is titled "Sam the Jumpin' Man."

It tells the familiar (to us) story of Sam's leaps that brought him fame and his one spectacular failure, that cost him his life on Friday, the 13th day of November, 1829, at the Upper Falls in Rochester.

Jagendorf departs from the traditional Patch story to conclude the chapter in this wise:

"Sam the Jumpin' Man swam and swam and swam until he came out in the China Sea where a New England sea captain who never told a lie said he saw him. Sam Patch was doing marvelous American deeds out there in the heathen lands. And for all I know, Sam may be still around some place jumping from heights no man ever jumped from before."

And for all I know, Sam Patch is sleeping the last sleep right where they buried him on a windy March day in 1830 —in the pioneer cemetery in old Charlotte, hard by the Genesee water that had conquered the greatest jumper of his time.

But folk tales are not necessarily historically accurate. For

years after the finding of Sam's body by a farmer who was breaking the river ice to water his horse, legends sprang up that Patch was still alive and had been seen in various places. Like Banquo's ghost, John Wilkes Booth and Jesse James, "Sam the Jumpin' Man" was a long time dying.

There's a minor mystery connected with the Patch saga which has always intrigued me. When Sam came to Rochester he brought with him a pet black bear which he led around on a chain. On his first and successful jump over the Genesee Falls on Nov. 6, 1829, Sam tossed the bear into the current ahead of him and Bruin swam safely to shore.

Sam made his second Rochester leap, his last on earth, at 2 o'clock on the afternoon of that ill-fated Friday the 13th. The bear was scheduled to jump at 3 o'clock. Of course he didn't. But what became of him?

With apologies to M. Jagendorf, I would like to offer this sequel to the Sam Patch story:

They say that whenever November 13 falls on a Friday, at the hour of 3 in the afternoon, a little black bear, dragging his chain behind him, trots along an old Indian trail in the Genesee gorge and mounts to a ledge above the cataract. He is poised as if to leap. Then he looks about him, whimpering piteously. Finally he creeps back into the brush. The little black bear is looking for his master who never rose from the treacherous Genesee water that other Friday the 13th so long ago.

* * *

Some years ago I thought I had latched on to a new and elegant legend. A barber, no longer living and whom I knew only as Sam, one day while he was trimming my luxuriant locks, told me this tale:

Around the time of the first World War he was working in the Northern Allegany County village of Fillmore. Living in the Genesee River town was a young section hand known to all as Patsy. Patsy had in his heart the music of his native Italy. He had a clear, sweet voice and he could play the mandolin.

Sometimes at night, after he had looked long upon the wine when it was red, Patsy would take his mandolin and climb out on the 155-foot-high viaduct of the Erie Railroad cutoff which straddles the valley east of the village.

The people who lived nearby would hear the music of his voice and mandolin wafted down from the high bridge. They speculated each evening after the chores were done whether Patsy would come to the bridge that night. When they did not hear his serenade, they were disappointed.

One night when the harvest moon was shining and all was still, Patsy's song ended sharply—in the middle of a note. The neighbors did not think anything of it at the time. They figured maybe Patsy had dozed off.

The next morning they found his crushed body at the foot of the high bridge. His fingers still clutched the strings of his mandolin.

And ever since on moonlit nights in the harvest time, if you listen closely, you can hear elfin music floating down from the high bridge—Patsy singing as he strums his mandolin.

That's the way Sam the barber told me the story. He told it as Gospel truth. In those days I did not recognize a legend when I heard one. So in my blindness I checked up on the story down Fillmore way. I found nobody who had ever heard of Patsy or his untimely end, to say nothing of hearing his real or spectral music.

So I wrote off Sam the barber as a phony tipster. Now I know he really was a great creative artist. For legends are not made of such dull coarse stuff as facts. They are woven of the gossamer threads of fancy.

I should have let "The Legend of the Minstrel on the High Bridge" age in the wood a little longer. Legends need plenty of the seasoning of time.

Chapter 6

Written on Stone

A thousand ways cut short our days,
Some are exempt from death.
A honey bee by stinging me,
Did stop my mortal breath.

After 142 years those curious lines, testimony to the hazards of frontier life, may still be deciphered on a tombstone in the little old cemetery under the fir trees, just south of Shortsville on the road to Canandaigua.

It marks the last resting place of Timothy Ryan who departed this life in 1814.

Another epitaph in a nearby graveyard records the fate of Miron Aldrich who died in 1819 at the age of 8 years:

My lot was to be scalt to death,
Hot boiling sap did stop my breath;
This grave my body doth enclose,
To take its last and long repose.

Scattered all over Western New York are burying grounds with old headstones that bear inscriptions that seem quaint today. Some of the graveyards are well kept and trim, like the one on the hill overlooking the village of Wyoming

where this lugubrious verse is on the tomb of a pioneer who died in 1815 at the age of 42:

Death, the conqueror of mankind,
Has hurled his darts at me;
My body is in the grave confined
As all mankind must be;
Farewell to all things here below,
I bid a last adieu;
My Sophie dear, I had to go,
No longer stay with you.

On another headstone in Wyoming, that of a man who died in 1845 at the age of 82, is this realistic inscription:

When age is gathered in the tomb,
The tears of sorrow we may wipe;
No tender flower nipt in the bloom,
But a shock of corn, mature and ripe.

The untimely demise of a man aged 26 in the year of 1823 is thus recorded on a stone in the little old burying ground along the highway between the West Henrietta Road and Honeoye Falls in the Town of Rush:

A lovely son, a friend most dear,
He was much wanted but now lies here.

There are cemeteries which have not known a burial in three quarters of a century. In them the lank grass and the weeds flourish and a thick blanket of myrtle covers the untended graves. Some of the stones are fallen.

In some gone-to-seed communities there are more people in the graveyard than there are living inhabitants. It is the older burying grounds, whether neglected or well kept, that yield the most treasure to the collector of epitaphs.

Some of the verses would hardly seem to have cheered those left behind, like this one on the grave of a man who died 144 years ago and is buried in the cemetery on the hill just north of the village of Marion:

You mourning friends, come here and see
Where you will shortly lie;
Remember when you think of me,
That you were born to die.

Some of the inscriptions hint of the futility of the battle against disease in the long ago. Several deaths in a single family within a short period tell of the toll taken by contagious diseases which medical science now has in large measure mastered. Diphtheria was likely to be fatal in the early days.

Certainly no medical society would be inclined to endorse the sentiment contained on a headstone along the Clyde-North Rose road.

Afflictions for long I bore;
Physicians were in vain.
'Til God was pleased to give me ease
And free me from my pain.

One is appalled by the heavy infant mortality of the early times, as indicated by many small headstones marking the graves of children, many of whom died in epidemics. Atop many of the little stones is the symbolic figure of a lamb.

A century ago the men in the monument business knew the value of advertising, for on some stones appear the names and addresses of the dealers.

The lines on the old tombstones also tell many a story of tragedy and heroism.

In Lake View Cemetery at Pultneyville, the port whence sailed many a schooner in the long ago, the village's maritime tradition is brought out by the fate of George Weed, who in 1825, "far from his home he died, drowned with his beautiful wife." Another stone recalls another lake tragedy. It marks the grave of John Stephenson, aged 21, who "with his crew was drowned in Lake Ontario Nov. 12, 1833."

And as revealed by the inscription on his tombstone in Oaks Corners, Cotton Dickinson gave his life for his church, for it is recorded that on July 18, 1804 he died "while in the act of raising the First Presbyterian Church in Phelps in the 34th year of his age."

A much more recent epitaph is on the headstone in Maplewood Cemetery on Middle Road in Henrietta where sleeps T. D. Jones who died in 1906, aged 89. It reads:

A friend of horses,
My monument maple trees.
The golden rule is my creed;
My religion is obedience to the
Angelic environments around me.

On the stone are the figures of a horse and two trees.

On a long low stone in the East Koy Cemetery near Pike in Wyoming County is this inscription which tells a graphic story of the frontier during the Revolutionary time:

Benjamin and Elizabeth Skiff lived in the Wyoming Valley during the Revolution, owning 500 acres where Wilkes-Barre, Pa. now stands. Benjamin and their son Stephen were in the war at the time of the Wyoming Massacre. In 1778 Elizabeth with two small children were spared by the Indians on account of previous kindnesses. Her forehead was marked with a red cross to indicate they were not to be molested, then

given their liberty. Carrying one child and leading the other she walked to Kent, Conn., her former home.

Charles L. Wallis, a professor at Keuka College, recently published a book, *Stories on Stone, a Book of American Epitaphs,* which contains 750 inscriptions collected from all over the country.

His collection includes several gleaned from Western New York burying grounds. One was found in Hope Cemetery at Perry and pays this tribute to an intrepid pioneer couple:

Here lies Rufus Sweet and wife
That fed the hungry and clothed the naked
And fought secret societies
And here may they rest until
Gabriel blows his horn.

Old Elmwood Cemetery in Pike, Wyoming County, yielded this inscription on the tomb of Andrew Jackson Brown who died in 1829, aged one year, after surviving his twin brother by only a few months:

Andrew Jackson is a twin
Who died of late
John Quiniemus is his mate,
Broke by sickness in a day
The short-lived beauties die away.

The sad fate of six-year old Clarisa Knapp who died in 1819 and is buried in the Warsaw cemetery is told in this verse:

A poisoned plant among the rest
In Nature's order stood
I eat and was distressed
It poisoned all my blood

So sudden was the stroke
By which I was snatched away
That in one hour life's thread was broke
And I was moldered to the clay

The unusual epitaphs are not all in the rural cemeteries. In Rochester's vast Mount Hope, "City of the Dead," on a cracked stone is a tribute to a local "Casey Jones," John Snell who in 1857 died in his locomotive cab, a hero at the age of 37. Below the reproduction of an old fashioned steam locomotive, these words are on the stone:

He came to his death in the discharge of his duty as an engineer on the New York Central Railroad by means of an obstruction willfully placed on the tracks in the night. Heroically keeping to his post in the engine, the Daniel Webster, to the last, he generously sacrificed his own life for the preservation of those under his charge. This memorial is erected by his fellow engineers and others.

Also in Mount Hope Cemetery, on a bluff overlooking the Genesee is a stone erected by an act of the State Legislature in 1891 to "the six burned beyond possibility of recognition" in Rochester's worst catastrophe, the Lantern Works fire which took 34 lives in 1888. On the monument are these words:

God was not in the Fire—and after the Fire a Still Small Voice.

Also in Mount Hope is the stately tomb of Nathaniel Rochester, founder of a city. The stone bears this simple legend:

If you seek his monument look about you.

* * *

The strangest graveyard story I have ever run across is not written in words on stone. It is the story of a bereaved husband's frenzied grief and it is written upon a monument in rather macabre fashion.

In the hilly land of the little Upland Lakes, South of Canadice Corners and not far from Christian Corners, is little, old but well-kept Evergreen Cemetery.

In that green plot stands a granite shaft 10 feet tall. The name "Waite" is inscribed on its heavy base. But you must look to the top of the shaft for the story. The top of the stone is broken off and its edges are jagged.

In the shadow of the mutilated monument are headstones at the graves of D. Byron Waite (1828–1905) and his wife, Harriet (1833–1869).

Byron Waite, a native of the Hemlock region, went West in his youth to become a surveyor in Minnesota when that territory was full of Indians. He came back to live with his wife and children on a farm near the Evergreen Cemetery. His wife died in 1869 at the age of 36, leaving their small children motherless.

Waite was heart-broken. As the story has been handed down, he ordered a monument for the family burial plot and just as workmen were about to raise the shaft, he seized a heavy hammer and struck the stone a mighty blow. A piece of the top fell off, leaving the jagged edge visible today.

Byron Waite told the shocked workmen that the broken shaft would always be a symbol of his broken family and his broken heart.

Chapter 7

Faded Coat of Blue

"My brave lad, he sleeps
In his faded coat of blue"

Those words are on a boulder beside busy Route 5 about midway between Caledonia and Avon. They are from a famous song written by a Caledonian. Of course he was a Scot. In the old days Caledonia was "little Scotland."

Around that boulder and the song hangs a strange sad tale of long ago. It is the story of a young soldier slain in cold blood by a comrade and of a strange purple flower that for many a year bloomed on his grave there beside the Caledonia-Avon Road—and nowhere else in these parts.

The story goes back to the year of 1814 when a contingent of American troops, enroute from Buffalo to Sackets Harbor during the War of 1812, camped overnight at the spot.

The soldiers had just been paid and inevitably there was a sound of revelry by night in the camp and in the tavern of Sylvester Hosmer down the road a little way. The tottering remains of the old Hosmer inn are still there.

The next morning the troops marched away down the dusty road—all but two men. Why those two were left be-

hind remains a mystery. Perhaps they overslept. Discipline was lax among the citizen soldiers who fought the Red Coats in the War of 1812.

In the afternoon the wife of tavernkeeper Hosmer heard a shot. It came from the direction of the camp. She thought little of it at the time because the sound of gunfire was common on a frontier where all the men were hunters.

But later on she remembered the shot and finally she told her husband about it. In the dusk he went out to the camp ground and there in some bushes close to the road he found the body of a young soldier, shot to death.

At the next roll call of the troops two men failed to answer. One was John Alexander. The other was William Comfit.

A squad was sent back to the Caledonia camp site. There the soldiers learned of the finding of their comrade's body. They identified it as that of John Alexander, a mere boy from a small Connecticut town near New Haven. They found no money in his pockets. They buried him in his blue uniform beside the road and they began a grim hunt for William Comfit.

The search was short. They found their man in a tavern. On Comfit's person they found more money than his pay. He had murdered a comrade for a few dollars and he was hanged before his company.

It would all have been soon forgotten in the Genesee Valley, dismissed as another melancholy incident of war, but for a strange happening the next Summer.

Just as the wheat was beginning to ripen in the Valley, the settlers noticed a strange flower raising its purple head above the soldier's grave. It had a single stalk which bore

a wax-like blossom, the like of which had never been seen before in that countryside.

The next year two more blossoms appeared. There were never any more. They never spread beyond the area of the grave. But for more than three quarters of a century the flowers were an annual wonder of the countryside.

Then came a Summer when there were no purple flowers on John Alexander's grave. They never bloomed again.

Maybe it's only a legend but the story has taken firm root in the garden of folklore in the Valley of the Genesee.

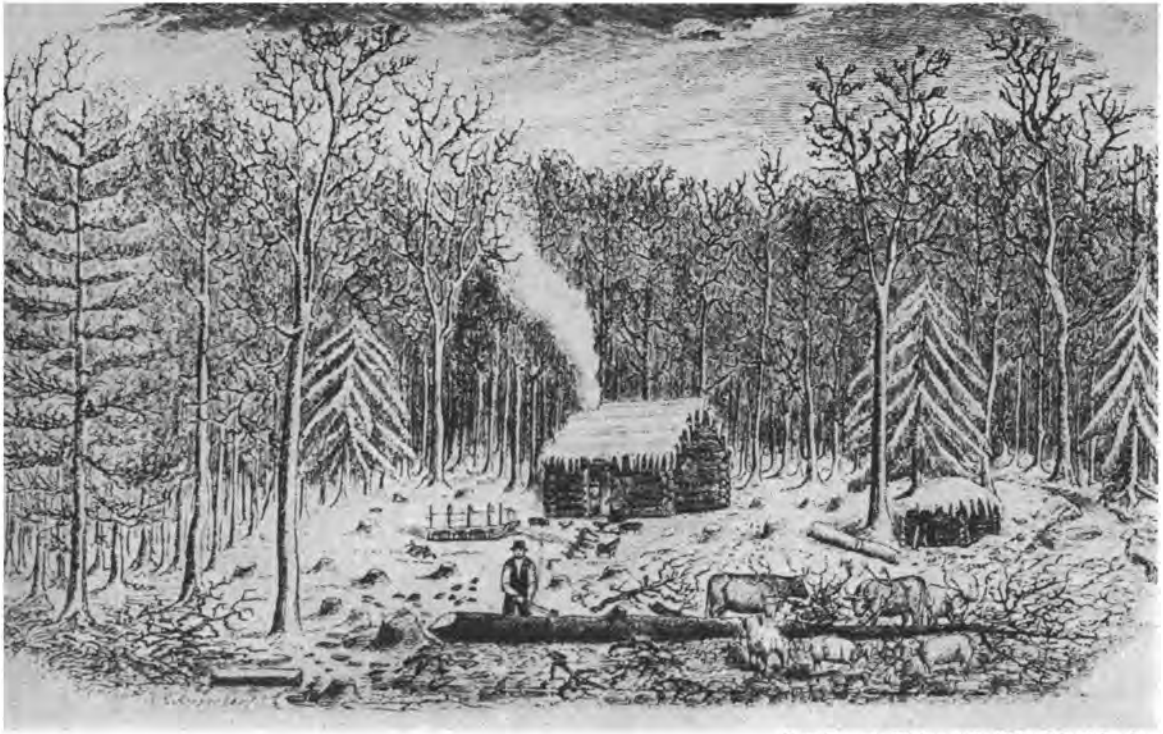
One who knew the story well lived down the road a little way. There's one of those blue state historical signs in front of his old home. Once it was a showplace of the region. Now it has a tired look but the years and the elements have not altered its stately lines. The sign reads:

JOHN HUGH MacNAUGHTON 1826–1891
Lived Here 20 Years. Famous Poet and Song Writer.

John Hugh MacNaughton was of the sturdy Scottish breed that settled the Caledonia area. His father, born in the old country, was a farmer and a practical man. He thought his son wasted too much time playing the violin and other musical instruments. The lad got his musical, poetic strain from his mother.

Despite his father's strictures, John Hugh went on playing the fiddle and the flute, writing poems and setting them to music all his life. After his marriage he bought the place near the old camp ground and he called it Babble Farm because of the spring-fed brook that rambled through it.

They called him "Poet John" to distinguish him from the other John MacNaughtons. The Clan MacNaughton was a numerous one. "Poet John" was a kindly, dignified and re-



From Turner's History of the Holland Land Purchase

In the Beginning Was the Pioneer

Legend-Haunted Bare Hill above Canandaigua Lake

served man with a black beard who shunned the limelight and was happiest on his beloved Babble Farm. 'Tis said he wrote many of his songs while sitting on a rock in a grove beside the babbling stream.

The soldier grave so near his home was in his thoughts when in 1865 he composed what is probably the best known of his songs, the one that begins:

"My brave lad, he sleeps
In his faded coat of blue.
In his lonely grave unknown
Lies the heart that beat so true."

When in 1924 the Caledonia Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution placed the boulder along Route 5 "in memory of a Soldier of the War of 1812, buried here in 1814," the first two lines of "The Faded Coat of Blue" were added to the inscription.

The chorus of the song, which was popular after the Civil War although it was inspired by the fate of a soldier of an earlier conflict, goes like this:

"No more the bugle calls the weary one,
Rest, noble spirit, in thy grave unknown.
I'll find you and know you
Among the good and true,
When a robe is given
For the faded coat of blue."

Other popular MacNaughton songs, besides "The Faded Coat of Blue" were "Belle Mahone," "Jamie True," "Mary Aileen" and "The Blue and the Gray."

This bearded farmer with the dreamy mysticism of Scotland's hills in his blood set to music the poems he composed.

He also produced considerable verse. Some he sold to national magazines.

One of his poems, *Onnalinda,* was published in book form. "Poet John" placed the scene in his own Genesee Valley. It is a story of the invasion of the Indian country by Denonville's French army in 1687.

The heroine is a forest princess, the child of a Seneca chief and a white girl captive. The hero is an Englishman, who, improbably enough, was a deserter from the French army. Between them they outwitted the Marquis Denonville.

The poem has a majestic swing to it, somewhat in the style of Sir Walter Scott, so admired in his time. It reveals the poet's deep feeling for the romantic beauty and stirring history of his "ain countree," the Genesee Valley.

"Poet John" had a slice of fame. He cared little for it. He lived quietly on his Babble Farm and there he died in 1891. Now he sleeps with his clansmen in the old United Presbyterian cemetery in Caledonia.

Chapter 8

The Last Camp Fire

When the last ember of the last camp fire of the state G.A.R. cooled on June 11, 1948 in Rochester's Highland Park, a link was severed with the American past.

A parade and pageantry accompanied the mustering out of the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of New York. The center of attention was an old man dressed in blue, Rochester's James A. Hard, then 106 years old. He and another comrade, who was too frail to attend the ceremony, were the only ones left in the Empire State.

(James A. Hard passed away on March 12, 1953. He was 111 years old, the oldest of only two surviving Union veterans of the more than 2,675,000 who answered Lincoln's call to arms. That other comrade, last of the Boys in Blue, Albert Woolson, died in Duluth on August 2, 1956 at the age of 109. With him died the Grand Army of the Republic.)

The last camp fire of the G.A.R. in 1948 meant a holiday for the school kids. To them the Grand Army of the Republic is only a sonorous name out of the long ago and the Civil War almost as remote as the War of 1812, something one studies in a history class. And those who had fought in that war and who had lived so many years upon this earth, seemed hardly real to the youngsters. They were like figures on a pedestal, like the statues in the parks and squares.

But to an older generation, the Grand Army is not merely a name. Many of us remember when our fathers, grandsires and greatuncles donned their blue coats and their wide-brimmed hats with the gold braid on them and sallied grandly off to the encampments of yesteryear. To us the veterans of the Civil War will always be vital human figures.

For the Grand Army was people, all sorts of people. They were citizen soldiers and they griped about the long marches, the hardtack, the shoddy blankets, the blunders of their officers, as all soldiers do. They fought and some of them bled and then they came back home to their farms, their harness shops, their canal boats, their bookkeeper stools, their factory benches and they griped about the pensions the government gave them, as all veterans do.

They formed their G.A.R. posts, they paraded, they picnicked, they played cards, they sang the old songs and talked over the old days. Often the importance of the battles in which they had fought and the part each played in them were magnified in the light of retrospect. And as the years went by, they grew a little grayer, a little stouter and their steps a little slower.

It seems only yesterday that the veterans flocked into town by the hundreds for their encampments. They were old men and some of them walked with canes, but their spirits were blithe and they were such likeable old fellows that we thought the Grand Army was eternal, like a broad river flowing through our national life.

Now it is hard to realize that "Taps" has sounded for the Boys in Blue; that there will be no more encampments; that not one Union veteran is left.

The Grand Army of the Republic was born in 1866, in the wake of Northern victory. It might have been called

"The Grand Army of the Republicans." Organized in a burst of purple rhetoric by the G.O.P. Senator-General, John A. (Black Jack) Logan of Illinois, it really was a political arm of the radical Republicans who were fighting the liberal policies of Andrew Johnson in dealing with the beaten foe. The radicals wanted the South treated as a conquered province. They were determined that the Southern Democrats should not regain their pre-war power in Washington.

In the early 1870s the tactics of Logan and his henchmen who instituted secret rituals and were fiercely partisan sent the G.A.R. membership down to 25,000 from an imposing 240,000. The tide turned in later years and in 1890, a peak year, there were more than 400,000 names on the rolls.

The former open partisanship was masked by benevolent measures for veterans. But still the organization was basically Republican.

In every Presidential campaign up to 1896 the G.O.P. waved "the bloody shirt," rallying the veterans to their standard by keeping alive old sectional passions. It is significant that every elected Republican President after Andrew Johnson and up to Theodore Roosevelt was a Union veteran.

Welding the G.A.R. ranks together was a common interest in pensions. The candidate who promised the most liberal pensions was likely to get the veterans' votes. At that, their demands were modest compared with those of present day veteran organizations.

When I was a boy there were a number of Civil War veterans in our village. I remember one bearded old fellow in particular who would sit on the steps of my father's store and denounce loudly and bitterly to his fellow "setters" the inequalities of the pension grants. "I fought all through the

war, was wounded at Antietam and have limped ever since," he would shout, "while so and so never got farther South than Elmira and he gets almost twice the pension I do."

Older Rochesterians will remember when back in the 1880s and '90s the hoarse moan of the Kimball tobacco factory whistle at noon would bring a stream of men, all clad much alike, out of City Hall and Court House. They wore beards or sweeping mustaches, along with their wide dark hats and dark coats on each of which shone the gold button of the G.A.R. The Grand Army was mighty on the public payrolls in those days.

There were many veterans of the Civil War who never belonged to the G.A.R. Democrats did not feel at home in those ranks. Rival organizations sprang up but they did not last long.

But there are pleasant memories of the Grand Army that have nothing to do with politics or pensions. Actually it was a handful of leaders rather than the rank and file that concerned themselves with such matters. The rank and file liked to go to the post meetings and play cards with "the other boys" after the business sessions; to march in the parades and renew old friendships at the encampments and reunions at lake, bay and park resorts in steamboat and railroad excursion days.

In memory the Grand Army parades again and the old songs come welling up across the years:

Bring the good old bugle, boys—Tenting tonight on the old camp ground—We'll rally 'round the flag, boys—John Brown's body—Mine eyes have seen the glory.

The eighty-second and last encampment of the state department evoked memories of other gatherings of the vet-

erans. Several state encampments have been held in Rochester but most memorable are the two national conclaves.

The first was in August, 1911, a month after the Shriners of the nation had spent a festive and still remembered week in Rochester. That encampment brought more than 25,000 persons to the Genesee. Jolly, obese President William Howard Taft made a speech and reviewed a mammoth parade in which most of the veterans marched on foot.

The sessions were enlivened by the introduction of a resolution urging removal of the statue of the Confederate general Robert E. Lee from the Hall of Fame in Washington on the grounds that he "was a traitor to his country." The resolution did not pass but it is significant that it was proposed nearly half a century after the surrender at Appomattox.

To the Union veterans the conflict of the 1860s was not the Civil War but "The War of the Rebellion," just as below Mason's and Dixon's line it was "The War Between the States." In later years the Blue and Gray met in amity on old battlefields of the war. Time is a great healer.

The closing sessions of the 1911 gathering were saddened by the Lehigh Valley Railroad train wreck at Manchester, where two coaches, containing many veterans homeward bound from the convention, plunged off a high bridge into the Canandaigua Outlet. Of the 29 persons killed, one was a G.A.R. member and several others were among the injured.

During the 1911 encampment, a giant panoramic map of the battlefield of Gettysburg was hung in the Sibley store and the old soldiers, pointing with their canes to the places on the map, argued vehemently about the battle strategy.

The national Grand Army returned in 1934 during

Rochester's Centennial celebration. The ranks had thinned sadly since 1911. The veterans were in their 80s and 90s but their hearts were young.

Each veteran was assigned a Boy Scout guide. I remember one thirsty old fellow, who wanted to do his own sightseeing, brandishing his cane as he shook off his Boy Scout guide with these words: "Go away, consarn ye. Where I'm goin', you shouldn't go."

Maybe on such a solemn occasion as the last camp fire of the G.A.R., I should not inject so light a note. But the Grand Army of the Republic was made up, not of "plaster saints," but of people, mighty human people.

Chapter 9

Flags for the Rebel Graves

It is the eve of another Memorial Day (1956) and small American flags are fluttering above the soldier graves in every Western New York cemetery.

In at least four of them—in Mount Albion at Albion, in Fairfield Cemetery in Spencerport, in Pittsford and Walworth cemeteries—another flag is floating beside the Stars and Stripes. It is a flag of red with crossbars of blue, studded with 13 white stars. It is the emblem of "the Lost Cause," the banner of the Confederate States of America.

It is the flag under which Andrew Hall, DeWitt Clinton Guy, John Thurman and James Blyth fought in what they always called the War Between the States. In previous years their graves had been marked only with the flag they fought *against.*

How come these "rebel" flags in the Northern graveyards? One way to start a story is at the beginning. This one began after Memorial Day of 1952 when I wrote about Albion's Sheret American Legion Post marking the grave of Confederate veteran Andrew Hall with an American flag.

Hall was a native of South Carolina who came North after the war, married a Northern girl and lived for 61 of his 102 years at peace with his neighbors, even those who had been his foes in battle. His old wounds must have ached a little

when he saw the Grand Army parading through the streets of Albion to the hated tune, "Marching Through Georgia," but he kept his feelings to himself.

He once was a familiar figure in the village as tender of the Main Street lift bridge of the Erie Canal. His idol was his old commander, Robert E. Lee. It seems he had been a hostler for the general.

Hall died in 1945 and his wife joined him in Mount Albion within a few months. No headstone marks his grave or that of his wife. My 1952 story mentioned that fact and also expressed the hope that Hall's native state of South Carolina might provide some sort of marker for its soldier son.

That caught the eye of the postmaster at Pineville, S. C. He happens to have been born and bred in Rochester. After the second World War he reversed Andrew Hall's procedure and went South to live. He is Howard H. Kemp, Jr., the son of a veteran Rochester newspaperman. Howard, Jr. is active in veteran affairs in his adopted state.

When May of 1953 rolled around he sent me a Confederate flag. I took it up to Albion and John Shourds, historian of Sheret Post, placed it on the grave of Andrew Hall, veteran of the army of Lee. The next year Kemp saw to it that a C.S.A. marker also came for the grave and each year I see to it that John Shourds gets a Rebel flag to put in the marker.

* * *

Publicity about the Hall marker brought information that another Confederate veteran is buried in Western New York. Mrs. Charles A. Hutton of Bangs Road, Churchville, wrote me that her great-uncle, DeWitt Clinton Guy, who

wore the gray of a Virginia regiment, sleeps in Spencerport's Fairfield Cemetery.

Soldier Guy was born in 1842 in Lockport. His father had come from his native Virginia to work on the building of the Erie Canal locks. He named the son born in New York State DeWitt Clinton after the governor who had fathered the Erie Canal. After his father was killed in a cave-in, young Guy joined his kin in Virginia and when war came, enlisted in the 11th Virginia Guards as a private. He was wounded in the hip, taken prisoner and spent some months in the Union prison camp at Elmira.

In 1867 he came back North and married Martha Flagg of Ogden whom he had met in York State before the war. The couple went to live in Lynchburg, Va., where Guy was in the wholesale grocery business. The bearded veteran walked with a cane when he came North to visit his wife's relatives and his war wound had much to do with his death in 1889 at the age of 47, Mrs. Hutton said.

He was buried in Lynchburg and his widow returned to Monroe County where she died in 1891. Around 1903 Mrs. Hutton's grandmother, a sister of Martha Flagg, had the body of the Virginia veteran brought to Spencerport and re-interred beside his wife in Fairfield Cemetery.

The G.A.R. put one of its standards at his grave and each year an American flag was placed in it. Mrs. Hutton, while appreciating the gesture, said: "I am interested in seeing his grave marked with a Confederate flag as he would want it."

Thanks to Howie Kemp, her wish came true. He not only sent a Rebel flag in 1954 but brought one, along with a C.S.A. marker, to Mrs. Hutton in 1955.

* * *

In the meantime other readers informed me that two other veterans of the Confederacy are buried in Western New York. And in May of 1955 two more flags of "the Lost Cause" came from South Carolina for their graves.

The other two "Rebels" are John Thurmon of East Rochester and James Blyth of Walworth.

John Thurmon was born in Franklin County, Missouri, in 1843. He was only 18 when he joined the 2d Missouri Cavalry, recruited to drive the Yankees out of that border state. Later he fought in the Mississippi campaign against Grant.

He came to East Rochester from a town near St. Louis in 1899, only two years after that industrial village, at first called Despatch, had risen almost overnight beside the sprawling new car shops.

Along with several relatives, all wood-working mechanics like himself, John Thurmon found employment in those car shops and served there almost all of his working years as a foreman.

He was a popular and respected citizen of his adopted town. He marched in the Memorial Day parade with the men of the Grand Army and they called him comrade. When at the onset of World War I, a tall flag staff was erected atop the tower of the car shops administration building, John Thurmon, who had worn the gray, and Alpheus Hodges, who had worn the blue, pulled the halyards that hoisted the flag of a united nation to its place.

Thurmon died in 1919 and is buried in Pittsford Cemetery. At Memorial Day time Jules Verne Fish Post of the American Legion builds a miniature cemetery in East Rochester's village park. There is a cross and a wreath for

each departed veteran. From the beginning of the custom, the former "Rebel," John Thurmon, was remembered.

And now at Memorial Day time, the Stars and Bars floats beside the Stars and Stripes at the grave of John Thurmon, the onetime Confederate cavalryman, in Pittsford burying ground.

* * *

James Blyth, Walworth's ex-Confederate, was born in England in 1824 and soon after coming to Niagara County, went to live in Biloxi, Miss. There he became chief of police and later postmaster. He married a wealthy Biloxi girl, opened a general store and prospered—until the Civil War came. Then he enlisted in the 3d Mississippi Infantry at the age of 37.

War's end found the Blyths ruined financially. The family silver, the fine piano, the slaves, the carriages and horses were all gone with the wind. To Walworth where he had relatives James Blyth came with his wife, a trunkful of worthless Confederate money and little else.

The Southern girl who before the war had known every luxury, even a coachman, is remembered by older residents of Walworth as walking down the dusty road to the village with a basket of eggs to trade for groceries. She wore faded farm clothes, her face was sad but she held her head as high as when she had been a belle in Mississippi.

James Blyth died in 1886 and is buried in Walworth Cemetery. His younger brother Jabez sleeps in the Baker Cemetery, west of the village. You read on his headstone that he was born in 1840 and died in 1898 and that he served in Company B., 9th New York Heavy Artillery.

There is no record that the brothers who fought on op-

posite sides in the great war ever faced each other on the battlefield.

Walworth's Legion Post puts flags on the graves of the two brothers before each Memorial Day. These last two years the "Rebel" flag has been there with the other one at the last resting place of James Blyth, who in his late years must have echoed Sherman's definition of war.

It seems rather incongruous that I should be taking Rebel flags around to Western New York communities. For I was never South of Newport News, Va. in my life and three of my paternal uncles were soldiers of the Union. One of them was killed at the battle of Fair Oaks.

But with Howard Kemp's all-important help, I hope to keep the Stars and Bars flying each Maytime over the graves of those who fought under that banner and who sleep in our countryside.

I have read that the Memorial Day observance actually was initiated by the women of Columbus, Miss., in 1866, which was three years before General Logan issued his Decoration Day proclamation to the Grand Army of the Republic. The Southern ladies, while honoring their own war dead, put flowers on the graves of some Union soldiers buried in the same cemetery.

A little reciprocity for that magnanimous deed—even after more than 90 years—seems in order.

Chapter 10

A Civil War Mystery

Strange things turn up at moving time. Certainly mysterious and possibly historic is the letter that fluttered out of the pages of an old book when Mrs. Louisa Budgeon was preparing to move her belongings in May of 1953.

She was moving from her old home in West Street, Fairport, to West Church Street in the village. She came across the big old botany book in the barn where it had been stored for many a year She knew the book had belonged to her grandmother and was well over 100 years old.

But the document it had concealed, probably since Civil War days, startled Mrs. Budgeon no end. For on the ruled paper, of sturdy stock and with a crest at its top, was written in a clear hand:

Salsbury, March 26th/65

Prest. Davis
Honored Sir

The state of affairs in our distracted country coupled with the uniform success of the enemy has led me as your friend and a lover of the Confederacy to present a few ideas for your candid and careful consideration.

Our foreign relations continue as you are aware, unchanged. England and France show no increased friendliness.

In fact the London Times the great and leading organ of Great Britain which was formerly our fast friend begins to criticize our acts and lean very much to the North Side of the question. In view of these facts I have come to the conclusion that we need entertain but little hope of assistance from France or England.

I would suggest in case we continue unsuccessful that we move our armies into Mexico, dethrone Maxmillian and take possession of the country. There is a large part of the population dissatisfied with the rule of Napoleon and they would gladly welcome and assist us in maintaining our supremacy.

The climate is salubrious and well adapted to our constitutions as well as that of our slaves. By this means we could save also a large portion of our slave property, repudiate our war debt and rid ourselves of the hated rule of the plebian Yankees. I beg you careful consideration of this proposition hoping it may meet your cordial approval I remain your Obt. servant

G. T. Buregard.

The spelling and punctuation (or lack of it) are faithfully reproduced here. Immediately the question arises: If the signature is that of the famous Confederate general, Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, why are the letters "eau" in his surname run together so that the signature looks like "Buregard." Yet he always signed himself "G. T. Beauregard," not using the "P.G.T." And he was in North Carolina at the time and the idea of taking over Mexico was in keeping with his grandiose, impetuous temperament.

The letter was obviously directed to Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederate States of America. It was written in the South's darkest hour.

The name of Beauregard, once a glittering one, is forgotten now save in his native Louisiana and by students of

The "Hidden" Waterfalls in Rochester's Heart

Photo by Ivan Conklin, Democrat and Chronicle

When Mercury Ruled the Night Skyline

Civil War history. The general, born in 1818, was of an aristocratic Creole family. He was slightly built, olive skinned, delicate, with brooding dark eyes. Stephen Vincent Benet, in his epic poem of the Civil War, *"John Brown's Body,"* describes Beauregard as "with a heart as French as his name . . . lovable, fiery, bizarre, picturesque."

Military glory was his consuming ambition. He was graduated from West Point Military Academy and served with distinction in the War with Mexico. He had a brilliant reputation as an Army Engineer. Appointed superintendent of the Military Academy early in 1861, he immediately left that post to join the Confederate volunteers in his home state. At the age of 43 he was commissioned the first brigadier general in the Southern armies.

It was Beauregard who as commander at Charleston began the Civil War by ordering the bombardment of Fort Sumter. It was Beauregard who after being reinforced by Joe Johnston at the first Battle of Bull Run sent the Yankee army into inglorious flight. He emerged from that engagement the idol of the South. But he could never get along with Jefferson Davis. His plans were too bold, he was too ambitious, too vain, too flamboyant for the austere and stubborn president who had determined on a defensive war.

So the Creole general was shifted from division to division and seldom was he the first in command. That treatment embittered the proud, sensitive Beauregard but he never faltered in his devotion to "the Lost Cause."

He is credited with having saved Charleston from invasion in 1863 and with retarding Grant's advance on Richmond the next year. But still Davis never trusted him with an important command.

The 26th of March, 1865, the date on the paper found in

a Fairport barn, saw the hero of first Bull Run second in command to Joe Johnston in North Carolina where an outnumbered Confederate army was making a last stand against the conquering blue hordes of Sherman blazing a trail of ruin through the Deep South.

In March of 1865 the Confederacy was on its last legs. Atlanta, Savannah, proud Charleston all had fallen to Sherman who had cut the South in twain and was crunching onward in the Carolinas for the final kill. At Richmond the dogged Grant was closing in on the doomed army of Robert E. Lee. It was too late for any such grandiose scheme as moving armies to conquer Mexico—too late for anything but unconditional surrender. The Stars and Bars had not long to flutter.

A week after the date on the letter to "prest. Davis," Richmond fell and Jeff Davis and his cabinet were in full flight. On April 9 came Lee's surrender at Appomattox. Nine days later the Johnston-Beauregard army laid down its arms. Beauregard, his black locks dappled now with gray, went back home to New Orleans where in the post-war years he made money and achieved dubious fame as a commissioner of the Louisiana Lottery.

The discovery in a Western New York village, after 88 years, of a communication dealing with high-level policies of the tottering Confederacy presents an intriguing mystery and poses many questions.

Mrs. Budgeon, who never heard of or saw the letter until she ran across it at moving time, could not answer them. She recalled that five of her uncles fought for the Union and that one of them was with Sherman.

Did the letter come into that Yankee soldier's hands after

the surrender when many Confederate documents were seized by Federal troops?

Did Beauregard actually write it? If so why the signature that looks like "Buregard"? In a frontispiece of the general's biography under a picture of Beauregard is his signature, every letter of his name accentuated. Perhaps the dashing Creole, knowing the signature was for the book, added some flourishes.

The book which contains the picture and the signature is the first of two fat volumes titled *"The Military Operations of General Beauregard in the War Between the States."* The author, Col. Alfred Roman, was the general's aide and confidant. The two books account for virtually every day of Beauregard's army career.

On March 26, 1865, he was sending dispatches from his headquarters at Raleigh, N. C., some 75 miles east of Salisbury. However, rebel forces were stationed at the latter place at the time and the general may well have gone there by rail that day to inspect them. But that is pure conjecture.

But would a well educated man misspell the name of an important military center, as well as garble his own signature? There is no letter "I" in Salisbury at the top of the letter.

Is the paper a copy made by an aide? Did Beauregard dictate it? Or did the impetuous soldier dash it off, just to put his thoughts on paper? Did Jefferson Davis ever see it? If it is not genuine, what purpose could have been served by faking it?

But the $64,000 question is:

How did a communication, bearing such historic names and unfolding such a portentous plan, find its way from the North Carolina war zone to a Fairport barn, to be uncovered after 88 years?

Chapter 11

The Freedom Train

For well over a century now the trains have been rumbling in and out of Rochester.

The first one wheezed off to Batavia on the Tonawanda Railroad on April 4, 1837. It was a clumsy and slow affair according to modern standards. It had neither cow catcher, bell or whistle and its engineer blew a horn at every crossing. To the people who waved from the fences all along the right of way, it was a wondrous thing.

On the morning of February 18, 1861, another train pulled into the shed-like depot at Mill Street. From its rear platform a tall gaunt man in a stove-pipe hat and with a shawl over his stooped shoulders, spoke a few simple words. He was a homely man but his face lighted up as he talked and the people that packed the street felt the warmth of his spirit. That was Abraham Lincoln, President-elect, on his way to Washington to guide a divided country in one of its darkest hours.

Four years later, in April of 1865, Abraham Lincoln came this way again. The tall figure was at rest, in a flower-banked casket, and the train was draped in black. The people were hushed and some cheeks were stained with tears. The War President, murdered in the hour of victory, was going back home to Illinois.

There have been so many trains . . . The Special Trains with the banners and the buntings from which the presidents and would-be presidents spoke to cheering partisans . . . the trains that brought European royalty, statesmen and princes of the church . . . the troop trains that carried our sons off to the wars . . . the long excursion trains in the leisurely days of yore . . . the gaudy circus trains . . . the proud fast express trains with the VIPs in the club cars . . . the humble locals with the Little People in the day coaches, stopping at every little place.

Now (in November 1947) another train is coming to town. It is like no other train we have ever seen. It is the train of all our yesterdays, of today and of our tomorrows. It is symbolic of all that we as a people have been, all that we are, all that we hope to be. It is the Freedom Train.

No gold braid, no frock coats, no brass bands ride the Freedom Train. Some 40 men are aboard, ordinary mortals who guard the 128 documents that are kept under glass; just a lot of papers, some of them yellow and brittle with age and the writing on them faded and dim.

But some of the words on those old papers will never die:

"We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among them are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness . . . that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among them, deriving their just powers from the governed."

Remember, you learned those words in school. They are from the Declaration of Independence, written in 1776, when a handful of colonists challenged a tyrant British king. The original statement of our liberties is on the Freedom Train.

In fancy you see red-haired Tom Jefferson writing the immortal words with a quill pen, while wise old Ben Franklin and bold, irascible John Adams stand by and change a phrase here and there.

Along with the old documents and their guards shadowy figures of the departed great, fighters for freedom, ride the Freedom Train.

". . . to secure these blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America."

So concludes another old document. It was hammered out of controversy and compromise, out of the very birth pangs of the Republic and yet it still is a model for the governments of the world. On the Freedom Train is George Washington's personal copy of the Constitution, as it was reported to the Committee in Detail in August, 1787, and on the draft are corrections in the large firm handwriting of the master of Mount Vernon who had led a ragged army to victory.

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or the press or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

The writing on the old parchment is dim with age but the words of the Bill of Rights, writing into law "our unalienable rights," are among our most cherished heritages.

Roger Williams, persecuted by religious bigots; Patrick Henry, who dared to speak his mind amid the cries of "treason," and John Peter Zenger, who went to jail to vindicate his right to print the truth, ride the Freedom Train.

". . . that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that the government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

Again we see the gaunt, lined man in the tall hat as we read Lincoln's Gettysburg Address in his own handwriting just as he delivered it on the battlefield in 1863.

Lincoln's signature appears on another document of freedom. It is the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the slaves, issued on Jan. 1, 1863. A Negro of dignified bearing with a leonine head smiles triumphantly, for part of his long battle for the freedom of his people has been won. And Frederick Douglass, born in slavery and for 20 years a resident of Rochester, rides the Freedom Train.

There's another paper, addressed to the Congress in 1873, the petition of the National Women's Suffrage Association for legislation giving women the right to vote in the several states. High on the list of signers is a name well known to Rochester. And Susan B. Anthony, all her adult life a fighter for freedom, rides the Freedom Train.

During the Revolution a Massachusetts woman, Deborah Gannett, served for three years in the army under the name of Robert Shurtleff, was wounded at Tarrytown, witnessed the surrender of Cornwallis and was honorably discharged, still keeping the secret of her sex, in 1783. On the Freedom Train is her claim for a pension made in 1818 in her own handwriting. Of Rochester interest is the fact that publisher Frank Gannett is a collateral descendant of this fighter for freedom.

There are many other documents, the compact made by the Pilgrims on the *Mayflower* in 1622, a draft of Washington's Farewell Address, official papers of such leaders in America's eternal fight for freedom as Andrew Jackson,

Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

There are flags on display, along with the priceless papers of the past. Among them is the original 31-star banner that flew from the mast of Commodore Perry's flagship when he opened Japan to the world in 1854. That same flag was on the U.S.S. *Missouri* when the island kingdom surrendered in Tokyo Bay on Sept. 2, 1945.

And there's another historic flag, the one the Marines raised on Iwo Jima that same year.

The great ones of our history ride the Freedom Train. But they are not alone. The Little People are there, too—the soldiers whose bloody footprints stained the snow at Valley Forge—the farmers who left their plows in the fields, grabbed their muskets and stood off the Redcoats at Bunker Hill—the pioneers who braved the perils of the frontier and tamed the wilderness—the humble men of many bloods who followed the colors in all the wars, the Unknown Soldiers for freedom who ride the Freedom Train.

The Freedom Train, which is streaming across the land from city to city, is a modern Paul Revere. It is sponsored by the American Heritage Association, a non-political, citizens' group, which is "dedicated to raising the level of active citizenship in our country by reasserting the principles of liberty and by calling the attention of Americans both to their civic rights and to their duties as citizens."

There is among us a cynical element who will call this "old-fashioned flag-waving" and the whole program "provincial" and "a lot of corn." If that element ever becomes the majority, if that blasé school of thought prevails, then America is utterly and irrevocably lost.

Chapter 12

Father Rochester at the Four Corners

The rush hour traffic stormed past the Four Corners. Buses lined the curbs for blocks. The streets were filled with hurrying, homeward-bound humanity. Automobile horns, the whistles of the traffic cops, the screech of brakes and the tramp of many feet merged into a cacaphony of sound.

A familiar picture to Rochesterians of today.

But to an old man standing on a corner in the shadow of the Powers Building it was an unfamiliar scene. He was an incongruous figure in the jostling crowd, that old man, six feet tall, stopped, pale and thin.

His hair, thick and snow white, hung down over the collar of his gray, long-tailed broadcloth coat. His neck was encased in a stiff, white stock. A bell-crowned beaver hat, a blue vest and blue breeches completed the ensemble. His hands grasped a heavy cane.

There was something commanding about his presence, something impelling in the tired yet keen eyes that surveyed the scene in such obvious wonderment.

Some of those in the hurrying crowd never saw the old man at all. They were too engrossed in the stock market closing figures or the entries at Batavia Downs or figuring out ways and means of meeting the next installments on the power lawn mower and television set.

Others stared and said, "Oh, he must be advertising a historical movie or some breakfast food. Anyhow he's dated, about 1828."

Some dismissed him as "just some nut" or "somebody going to a masquerade party."

The thin old man was talking to himself, oblivious of the stares and grins. Had anyone bothered to listen, his soliloquy would have gone like this:

"So this is what blossomed out of the mud and the fever-laden swamps. Tall buildings set among squat ones. Wide paved streets and broad sidewalks—but some of the old alleys left. What strange gay-colored carriages without any horses. What bustle and bedlam, sound and fury!

"In place of this, I see a little settlement around the river and the falls, surrounded by forest. I see ox carts wallowing, hub deep in muddy lanes, teams hauling firewood, wagons with lumber from Allegany County, tan bark from Salina, wheat from the Genesee Valley, prairie schooners bound for Ohio and Illinois.

"Horses tied to wooden rails. A big wooden watering trough in front of a tavern. The town pump. A bugle call and the loose planks of the Main Street bridge rattle as a stage coach thunders in from Canandaigua and pulls up in front of the frame building with the sign, 'A. Reynolds Tavern and Postoffice' on it.

"The sidewalks are wooden and narrow and the crosswalks are stone slabs that some of the wagons uproot. I smell the pig sties and the tan bark. I hear the roar of the falls and the profane shouts of the drivers on the towpath of the Erie Canal.

"But above all sound the pounding hammers and the rasping saws. Buildings are going up on all sides. Merchants

are already serving the trade on the lower floors of buildings while workmen are nailing the roofs over them.

"Everything seems half finished. There stand a few neat frame houses, freshly painted white, a few of sturdy brick in contrast to the log cabins with stick chimneys and stone chimneys. In the distance any direction is the forest. Stumps line the road to Buffalo and stray cattle wander over the village burial ground. It's a raw, confused young settlement but it has conquered the wilderness, the wolves, the bears and the rattlesnakes.

"It is a booming place. It hints of future greatness. There are the Red Mill, the Yellow Mill and five other flouring mills with great stones. They line the river between the two falls and they grind the wheat of the Genesee Valley into flour that is shipped over the Grand Canal to faraway market places.

"The masonry is hardly dry in the Aqueduct, partly built by convict labor, which carries the Erie Canal over the river, a great engineering feat. What a celebration when the canal was finished and Rochester's own *Young Lion of the West* joined the cavalcade that bore De Witt Clinton from Lake Erie to the Hudson and relays of cannon boomed along its entire length.

"Twenty-eight barges cleared the locks here in a single day, out of Troy and Buffalo and Albany and Brockport, with cargoes of flaxseed, wheat, ashes, salt, whiskey and butter.

"In the taverns tough canalers, lake boat captains, farmers mingle with an occasionally visiting dandy from the East in white beaver hat and gaudy waistcoat. On the street are all manner of people—a few quiet Quakers with broad-brimmed hats; roughly dressed, rough-spoken drovers, brisk

horse traders, an Indian or two looking askance at these white people who have elbowed them off their lands.

"There are rows of little one- or two-story wooden shops—of gunsmiths, hatters, cobblers, comb makers, cabinet makers, auction stores, apothecaries, printers—places that sell bear oil so that ladies may plaster their hair down the middle of their foreheads.

"Potash kettles on the streets, wooden footbridges over the mill races, two-story brick buildings on stilts out of the quagmire at Buffalo and Sophia Streets, the nearby sulphur springs known to travelers, the circus with its wondrous equestrian acts and the museum on Exchange Street with its wax figures.

"St. Luke's stone church, the only building that remains of that settlement. The frame district school nearby. The Court House with belfry and cupola and high steps fronted by a terraced grassy plaza. The nearby jail with the high stone wall and the tall spire of the First Presbyterian Church in the background. The cool spring brook, full of trout, that runs by it.

"The open public market at the east end of the river bridge. Mason Street at its western edge, with a sandy beach along the river, merging into a grassy common that extends to the street that's named after Sam Andrews."

A sign with an arrow and the word "Shelter" caught the old gentleman's eye.

"What need do these self-sufficient people have of 'shelter'? Do the British fleets still raid Charlotte as they did in 1814? Whatever the danger is, it goes right back to the policies of Andrew Jackson.

"If there is danger, the militia should be out. The militia in swallow-tail coats of rifle gray, tall hats and two-colored

pantaloons. The militia, swinging through the mud, carrying muskets and the fifes and drums playing 'Hail Columbia,' on Training Days. I see the same old flag—only there are so many, many more stars.

"I see a few young men in olive drab and sailors in the oldtime blue. They're strong, sturdy boys, most of them. But the rest of the people that hurry so and push each other so rudely in their haste to get into one of the curious stages without horses, so many of them are pale and worried looking and dandified.

"Could these men hew down great trees to build their homes in a fever-plagued, swampy wilderness? Could their women make their own clothes and soap, bear and raise broods of children in log cabins? Do their old men work, as I did, in their gardens before breakfast, raise most of the food for their tables, carry their own packages home from the store, greeting their neighbors courteously as they pursue their ways without unseemly haste?

"Still they have builded well, these new people, in raising out of the mud and the marsh this city of tall buildings and comfortable homes and shaded streets. . . ."

A newsboy on the corner had caught some of the old man's talk. Impudently he addressed the tall figure in the outlandish clothes.

"What's the idea, old man, talking to yourself? Are you slap happy or what are you selling?"

The dignified old man drew himself up to his full height and fixed the saucy moppet with a stern eye.

"Are you speaking to me? If so, you had better mend your manners. Am I selling something? Young sir, long years ago, I sold the land on which all this stands, almost as far as the eye can see, 100 acres of it."

The wordly-wise young news vender was impressed. "Say, old man, who are you anyhow?" he asked in a subdued way.

The old man smiled as he turned away toward the Third Ward of the pillared mansions where dwelt the gentry of another day.

"My name," he said, "is Nathaniel Rochester."

Chapter 13

The Mill Town's First Christmas Tree

A sweet and mellow voice broke the starlit silence of a Christmas Eve in Rochester long years ago.

It was the pealing of the bell in the little German church in Grove Street and the year was 1840.

As if responding to a tocsin's call, the people began to assemble. Mostly they came in little groups. There were many children among them and all were warmly clad, for the wind that blew up the hill from the river was bitter cold.

Soon Zion Lutheran Church at Grove and Stillson Streets was full to overflowing. Curiosity was written on many faces. All eyes were on an evergreen tree that stood in front of the pulpit. It was a tall and noble spruce tree and it was decked with candles, toys and sweetmeats.

A man with a lighted taper mounted a ladder and the people whispered: "See he is lighting the candles on the tree. How brightly they shine against the greenery. How beautiful it is."

They were exclaiming over the first Christmas tree that Rochester had ever seen.

But there were in that audience a few whose eyes grew soft with remembrance when the candles were lighted on the tall green tree. They were thinking of other Christmastimes and of old customs in a land beyond the sea.

Only a few years had passed since they had left the German homeland and crossed the ocean to seek free lives in a free new land. Many of them had come by canal packet to live in the flourishing mill town beside the falls of the Genesee. They built plain substantial homes and their little church. They were hearty, thrifty folk. By 1840 there were 5,000 of them in a city of 20,000.

One of them was a young man who loved all green and growing things. His name was George Ellwanger. At the age of 12 he had left his father's farm in Württemberg to serve a four-year apprenticeship with the leading nurseryman of Stuttgart.

He had landed in America, a youth of 17. On his way West to the home of relatives in Ohio, his canal boat stopped in Rochester and the bustling spirit of the young boom town and the richness of the countryside captured his fancy. In a few months he was back in Rochester, to live the rest of his days.

Only two months before that Christmas Eve of 1840, with his Irish-born partner, Patrick Barry, he had established out Mount Hope way a nursery which was in its time to become the largest in all the world.

In the mill town whose people were mostly of the Yankee stock, George Ellwanger found that Christmas was a day of rather austere religious observance. He remembered the holiday in the Fatherland, the green trees alight with candles, the songs, the bells, the legends, the feasting and, above all, the joyous laughter of the children.

So with some of his countrymen he set up in the little church the fine tree that they had cut in the woods south of the city and invited the whole community to the Christmas Eve celebration.

After the candles on the tree had been lighted, Christmas songs rang through the little church, the black-coated pastor made a short prayer and while the company was still under the spell of the scene, George Ellwanger made a little speech which began:

"As this is no doubt the first time for a great many of you to witness the celebration of our Saviour's birth according to the German custom, it may not be improper for me to make a few brief explanatory remarks."

He went on to describe the holiday in his native land: "On this day each year you see at daybreak in almost every town the windows decorated with illuminated evergreens and the children of their respective neighborhoods or congregations assembled just as you have seen tonight."

And there was reverence in Ellwanger's voice as he told the hushed assemblage:

"The object our forefathers had in view in adopting the practice was the desire to create in the minds of the young associations of a pleasing character in connection with the coming of our Saviour. The evergreen tree with these appropriate adornments and emblems was calculated to effect that grand objective. . . .

"What are all the glorious achievements which adorn your history to compare with this? What are all the brilliant deeds, both civil and military, that fill a nation's heart with gratitude compared to this? Mere transitory trifles as light as air when compared with the redemption of a ruined world."

Gracefully George Ellwanger closed his talk with the hope that "the people may have seen something worthy of imitation," although he said, "we do not pretend to be qualified to teach you anything."

Whereupon the people went to their homes with glowing hearts and faces, deeply impressed with what they had seen and heard.

And from that year on, the green trees with the lights upon their branches have been a part of Rochester's observance of the Christmas.

Since then, too, the holiday has been a more joyous one, a day of family gatherings and feasting, a day of warmth and color, not merely the severely formal religious observance that had prevailed in the Puritan tradition.

George Ellwanger has been sleeping in Mount Hope these many years and the little German church has been replaced by a larger one, but the beautiful custom he and his associates transplanted from their homeland will never die.

Chapter 14

The Janitor Came First

Who do you suppose led the first of the 105 Commencement Day academic processions of the University of Rochester? You would never guess it right in 105 years. It was the janitor of the University.

His name was James Noble and nobly he marched in his broadcloth and ruffled shirt, right behind Scott's Brass Band, in the long procession which on July 9, 1851 wound from the "campus," the four-story brick former United States Hotel in Buffalo Street near the Erie Canal to the splendid new Corinthian Hall.

That janitor-led parade was a heterogeneous one. It included "Clergymen and Editors," cheek by jowl, a strange grouping; "Teachers of Select and Public Schools" and "Strangers and Invited Guests," along with a small army of officialdom, including the judges of the Supreme and County Courts, the Mayor and the Common Council, the Board of Education and bringing up the rear, the Sheriff.

Of course, the faculty, trustees, founders and students of the fledging college, the little group of ten graduates among them, were in line. Also taking part were the faculty and undergraduates of the Rochester Theological Seminary which shared the old hotel building with the University. Both were cradled in the Baptist faith.

Janitor Noble was an important member of the college staff. His name was listed with the faculty in the catalogues. With his family he was quartered in the basement of the erstwhile hotel and his duties included running a dining room for "such students as might wish to take their meals there."

His cleaning duties included polishing at least one cuspidor, the one used by General Isaac Quinby, the tobacco-chewing mathematics professor. No doubt it was General Quinby's West Point training—he was a friend and classmate of U. S. Grant—that gave him his incredible accuracy in hitting the goboon. His marksmanship with a jet of tobacco juice is a University legend to this day.

In the whole procession there was but one cap and gown. It was worn by Judge Ira Harris, chancellor of the University. He later became a United States Senator and it was of him that Abraham Lincoln once said "he always looked under the bed before retiring, expecting to find Senator Harris there, looking for patronage." The *Rochester American,* then published by Leonard Jerome, grandfather of Winston Churchill, in its report of the ceremony, noted that "the Oxford cap, surplice and fine person of the chancellor formed a special point of attraction."

Contrast that lone cap and gown in the University's first academic procession, led by the janitor, with the brilliant spectacle held every June these days. The modern processions display the academic insignia of the world's greatest universities, worn by members of the faculties of the various schools of the University, with hoods of scarlet, gold, green, yellow, blue and other colors, symbolizing earned and honorary degrees from scores of universities.

If any janitors are present, they watch from the sidelines.

Chapter 15

Gray Ghosts Beside the Genesee

"And the grinders shall cease because they are few."
Ecclesiastes, 12:4

This is a story about ghosts and a lost title. It is, however, not so melodramatic or blood curdling as it sounds.

For the ghosts are merely old buildings—the gray stone mills more than a century old that squat on the banks of the Genesee. And the title is one that the city once bore proudly, relinquished long ago and came to forget it ever possessed it.

The words Flour City are still on Rochester's official seal although today there is not a mill in the corporate limits of the city that once was the greatest flour manufacturing center in America.

They are haunted streets—Brown's Race and Mill Street and Water and those Old World-like alleys that are dignified by the names of Graves and Aqueduct Streets. On them still stand a few of the old gray ghosts that once were flour mills. Now they serve other masters than the millers of the Genesee.

Sometime, when you are going over the Platt Street bridge, steal a glance upward at the old building on Brown's

Race at the southwest corner of the span. Across its top there are letters that have warded off the assaults of the years and they spell "Granite Mills."

When your bus stops at State and Brown Streets, gaze riverward and at the foot of Brown Street you will see another old stone structure in battleship gray that bears the dim legend, "Moseley and Motley Milling Company, Big B. Flour."

These old signs, the obsolete title on the city seal, a few historical sketches, the memories of an older generation—and the old gray ghosts themselves—they are about all that is left of the glory that was the Flour City and the grandeur that was the great mills of the Genesee.

Yet milling is Rochester's oldest industry. On a wall on the west side of Graves Street, until it was stolen in the Spring of 1956, was a tablet with this inscription:

Here in 1789
Ebenezer Allen
Built the First Mill
at the
Falls of the Genesee

"Indian" Allen, a colorful frontiersman with a penchant for bigamy, was Rochester's first settler and first industrialist.

When he built his crude wooden mill, there was a 14-foot waterfall about 150 feet south of the present Broad Street bridge. Blasting for the two Erie Canal aqueducts and the more recent dredging of the river have removed all trace of that source of early water power.

Allen's mill did not prosper. Settlers were few and widely scattered. The pioneer mill sold out in two years. Soon it was abandoned. It burned in 1807 and early settlers shunned

the site because of the rattlesnakes that lurked in its ruins. Yet Dr. Herman Leroy Fairchild, the geologist, was to write of it:

"The grinding of the first bushel of grain between the upper and nether millstones of the Indian Allen mill was the critical event that marked the change from barbarism to civilization in the Valley of the Genesee."

Allen's millstones were carved out of the native rock. Today they are embedded in the west wall corridor of the second story of the Monroe County Court House. After being rescued from oblivion, they served as the foundations for the lamp posts in front of the City Hall from 1873 until the present Court House was built in 1896.

Grist mills were sorely needed by the pioneers who first exploited the rich river bottoms. Hulling the corn and pounding the wheat, Indian fashion, with mortar and pestle was not what the settlers had been accustomed to in the older communities whence they came.

So there sprang up beside nearly every waterfall, rapids or swift current in the wilderness a mill with old-fashioned stones and water wheels. There over rough trails the pioneers hauled their grist to be ground into flour.

The early settlers found the alluvial soil of the river valley ideal for the growing of wheat and more and more mills were built. Naturally many of them gravitated to the falls at Rochester where waterpower was abundant and cheap.

Nathaniel Rochester, founder of the Flour City, was at heart a miller and, when buying land, always thought in terms of mill sites. When he and his fellow Marylanders, Charles Carroll and William Fitzhugh, purchased the One Hundred Acre Tract, which encompasses much of down-

town Rochester today, they were by no means blind to its potentialities as a milling center.

In the early days the grain was floated down the river in flatboats and arks. Boatmen with poles manipulated the clumsy craft through the narrow stream, studded with sunken logs and navigable only in the Spring and Fall. Laboriously they poled the boats upstream on the return trip.

Around the Aqueduct site, even before the advent of the Erie Canal, several mills were built, among them the historic Red Mill and the Yellow Mill. Men like Elisha Johnson and Francis Brown, leaders in the young community, built raceways that still course through the downtown section, unseen, although they now serve the power utility and not the big stone mills.

When in the 1820s, the Clinton Ditch was cut across the state to join the Hudson with Lake Erie, Rochester became the "Young Lion of the West," the fastest growing town in America.

With the building of the Aqueduct, the small falls that had powered the Allen mill became of little use and industry migrated to the Main Falls, now known as the Upper Falls, north of the New York Central tracks. Around Mill Street and Brown's Race rose more massive stone mills, high above the river and north of the cataract, which today is so hedged in by industry that its glory is all but hidden from the eye of man. Many of those mills still stand, for they were built of the native rock, laid stone upon stone—in a day of good workmanship.

Mules and horses strained at their burden along the canal towpath as hundreds of boat loads of Genesee flour went over the waterway to the four corners of the globe. The

name Genesee on a sack of flour was the symbol of excellence and commanded a top price in the markets.

In 1826 there were seven mills in Rochester and eight years later the city was recognized as the milling center of the continent. Those were glorious days for the growers and millers of Genesee wheat. For 20 years the Genesee Valley was the breadbox of the nation and the river bottoms were one mass of waving gold in the Fall. In consequence, the mills of Rochester sang an ever swelling chorus. Great quantities of grain came down the Genesee Valley Canal, begun in 1837 and abandoned as unprofitable in 1878.

In the 1850s a series of events combined to dethrone the Genesee Valley as the queen of the wheat lands. Out in the Middle West plows were breaking furrows on broad prairies and plains beside whose vastness the Valley seemed a mere garden patch.

In 1857 on the heels of a financial panic came the failure of the Valley wheat crop. Just before harvest time, it rained, day after day, a downpour that beat a tattoo of despair on the roofs of the farmhouses. The crop sprouted in the drenched fields and was almost a complete loss. Then the weevil and other plagues appeared. From those blows the Valley never fully recovered, although for years Livingston remained the leading wheat producing county of New York State.

But still the mills of Rochester roared on, grinding the grain that came pouring in from the West by steamer and canal boat and railroad train.

The late Maude Motley, historian of the milling industry, put the zenith of the Rochester mills at 1878. At that time there were 20 mills centered around Brown's raceway and Mill Street, with a few uptown on Water and Aqueduct Streets.

A picture taken in 1880 shows a solid row of flour mills along Brown's Race. But slowly and inexorably the West was coming into its own. More and more Western wheat was being ground, not in Rochester but in centers nearer home. In time Minneapolis grabbed the flour city scepter from this mill town on the Genesee.

Up to 1870 Rochester flour was shipped in barrels. Then the more convenient jute sack came into use. There were other improvements. All the mills replaced their old fashioned millstones with steel rollers and accompanying machinery as the age of steam merged with the era of electricity.

In 1899 only seven of the larger Rochester mills were in operation. In 1919 there were only five. The centennial year of 1934 found but three in the field: Moseley and Motley in Mill Street; Macauley-Fien in Graves Street and Van Vechten Mills in Smith Street. The first two have been closed for nearly two decades. In June of 1942 the Van Vechten Mills ground their last bushel of flour.

It was the end of an era. The long cycle that began with Indian Allen's wooden mill in 1789 was history. The mills of the gods had ground slowly but at last they had crushed between the millstones of time Rochester's first industry.

Buffalo today is the real flour capital. The Lake Erie city not only has the mills but occupies a strategic transportation position as a Great Lakes port.

A few flour mills hold forth in this vicinity, largely catering to the local markets. In the city itself there are only the gray ghosts that squat on the river bank.

Go down to Mill Street and Brown's Race and the past seems to hem you in. You can almost see the soft white flour dust in the air although the mill wheels have long been

stilled. You can almost hear the farmers' grain-laden wagons rumbling over cobblestone streets.

Fire has leveled many of the mills. Most of those remaining are in the service of the Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation and power stations dominate the old streets where once flour was king.

In the faded letters on the old mill walls and in the memories of a generation no longer young, the brands that once made the Flour City famous still linger, trade names like "Big B," "Pride of Dakota," "H. D. Stone," "Corona" and "Granite."

There are men with gray in their hair who recall long-gone Summers when they swam, without benefit of bathing suit, in the cooling waters of what they called "the mill pond down by the Big B." And sometimes, if a bathing suit seemed imperative, they wore what had been a "Big B" flour sack, with the legend on it still plain for all to see.

But all that was long ago. Father Rochester no longer is a dusty miller. He is a natty chap in quality clothing now and he carries a Kodak and binoculars in his hand and wears flowers on his lapel.

Chapter 16

The Hidden Waterfalls

In 1870 a young writer stood with his bride in a pagoda at Falls Field at the eastern brink of Rochester's Upper Falls and watched moonbeams play upon the falling waters.

His name was William Dean Howells and he was so impressed that when he wrote his first novel *"Their Wedding Journey,"* he included a chapter about Rochester which he called "The Enchanted City."

The man of letters would be disenchanted should he revisit Rochester these days. He would note the many evidences of our cultural and material progress, our parks and flowers and the general attractiveness of our city.

But he would have a hard time finding the magnificent waterfall that had so captured his youthful fancy. The only vantage point now is the Platt Street bridge and unless he went there on foot, the glimpse would be a fleeting one. And he would find a junk yard and some commercial structures where as late as the 1890s Falls Field remained a green and gay oasis in a grimy industrial desert.

William Dean Howells might well ask this question:

"How could a city, singularly blessed by nature with a wide river, a picturesque gorge and three waterfalls, be so short-sighted as to allow its crowning glory, the 96-foot cata-

ract in its very heart, be all but hidden away from the eye of man?"

He might even quote from the Bible about Esau who traded his birthright for a mess of pottage.

For it was the falls of the Genesee that gave Rochester being. Three shrewd Maryland speculators—their names were Rochester, Fitzhugh and Carroll—saw the latent power in the tumbling waters beside a dismal swamp and one of them built a mill town here that still bears his family name.

Otherwise the older settlement on Lake Ontario, named Charlotte after a woman and pronounced Shar-LOT, after nothing in this world, might well be the metropolis of the Genesee Country today. But it is doubtful if a port, dependent on lake traffic and without the magic water power, would today be the third city of the Empire State.

The tossing waters turned the wheels for the big stone mills that rose on the river banks and when the Erie Canal was dug and provided a road to market for the Genesee flour, Rochester became the milling center of America.

Once there were four waterfalls here. The pioneer "Indian" Allen mill in what is now Graves Street was powered by a 14-foot cascade where Broad Street crosses the river. That waterfall was obliterated by the building of the canal Aqueduct.

The Lower Falls are 84 feet high and times spectacular, their volume depending on the needs of the Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation. The 25-foot high Middle Falls are relatively insignificant. This opus deals with the Upper Falls, the 96-foot high "hidden cataract" almost in the heart of town.

In the time of Spring freshets, the thundering Upper

Falls are awe-inspiring. In time of deep freeze when they are sheathed in ice, they are equally splendid.

Tradition and history surround the hidden cataract. Early French explorers and priests wrote in their journals about "the river of many falls" in the Seneca Indian domain.

After the Revolution and the beginning of settlement in this region, the Genesee Falls, although still in the untamed wilderness, attracted some notable visitors. In 1795 the French Duke de Liancourt rode on horseback from Bath to see them. That same year the politician Aaron Burr detoured from the main trail at Avon to view their splendor. In 1797 Louis Philippe, later to become a king of France, came from Canandaigua with his two brothers. One of them, the Duke of Orleans, put their glory on canvas.

It remained for a daredevil, a professional jumper named Sam Patch, to put the young settlement of Rochester and its falls in the national spotlight in 1829. On Friday, the 13th of November that year, before 7,000 people, he jumped to his death from a 25-foot platform above the foaming waters. The week before he had leaped and lived.

After the fatal leap people began coming from far and near to see the place Sam Patch had made famous. Once New York Central trains were halted so that passengers might inspect the historic spot—at five cents a head. Nathaniel Hawthorne and Charles Dickens were among the celebrities who paid their nickel to see the falls.

In 1851 Daniel Webster soared into purple exaggeration when he paid tribute to Rochester's "150-foot waterfall" in a speech but 'tis said "the Godlike Daniel" had lingered at the flowing bowl.

At any rate Rochester for many years was linked in the public mind with its waterfalls.

The years brought more and more mills around the cataract. There remained one inviolate place, the green and gay picnic ground that was Falls Field on the east bank, north of the falls. Circuses pitched their tents there. Throngs watched De Lave walk a tight rope high above the gorge from Falls Field, which also was known as Genesee Falls Park.

The privately-owned picnic and amusement spot became a gathering place for the many Germans who had settled here. In the late 1870s and in the 1880s it was a festive place, with its beer garden, fountain, menagerie, merry-go-round and Rochester's first indoor ice-skating rink. In the Fall came the harvest festivals of the German community with their lively music and hearty jollity, a bit of the Fatherland transplanted to Upstate New York.

But in the 1890s Falls Field was dwarfed by the rise of Ontario Beach Park, the lakeside "Coney Island," with its trolley link to the city. So the high board fence came down, the music and laughter were stilled and commerce—and the junk yard—took over.

Falls Field should have been preserved as a public park. Indeed it should have been part of a system of parkways beside the river. In the 1840s the city had an opportunity to buy Falls Field for a park. Rochester missed the boat.

In fairness it must be noted that public parks were few in the America of that day. But up into the 1890s the oasis above the thunder water could have been acquired by the city—and wasn't.

You are saying, "What's the use of lamenting the mistakes of the past, of crying over spilled milk? It's too late to do anything about it now."

Maybe so. But I am fatuous enough to cherish what is

probably an idle dream, that some day Rochester will have the bold courage—as well as the money—to reclaim at least part of the old Falls Field, make it green and gay again and let the people see the glory of the waterfalls that gave their city being.

Chapter 17

Two Eastman Houses

On East Avenue's largest lot there are two houses.

One has been there since 1906. It is the 30-room Georgian mansion that George Eastman built when the Kodak golden tide began to roll in. Now it is a national museum for the photographic and motion picture arts—George Eastman House.

The other has been there only since July of 1954. But it is very old. It is the simple yet dignified frame house with the distinctive "built-in" porch in which George Eastman was born on July 12, 1854. It was brought to Rochester from Waterville, Oneida County, and reassembled at the time of the centennial anniversary of the magnate's birth.

The two houses in a way symbolize the story of Eastman's life, a story of struggle and achievement, a story not without its lining of pathos.

Like the unwinding of a long film from the spool of the years, the story of George Eastman may be told like this:

First, those boyhood years in Waterville, the Cherry Valley village surrounded by hop fields and the old white house facing the Plank Road, down which his father commuted to Rochester where the senior Eastman in 1850 had established one of the first business schools in America . . . The family's

removal to Rochester in 1860 when George was six years old . . . Then the death of his father two years later, leaving no estate.

Then the hard years when the widow had to take in boarders and every penny counted, when there was instilled into the schoolboy's heart the fear of poverty that obsessed his formative years.

Years of work after a frail lad of 14 took his first job, that of a $3-a-week errand boy for a real estate agent in the old Reynolds Arcade . . . His first interest in photography when he bought a few pictures and frames out of his savings . . . His first interest in music when he bought a flute although he never in his life could master a tune . . . His 17th birthday when he bought his first tools and a work bench . . . Then a proud new job as bookkeeper for the Rochester Savings Bank.

There was the day in 1874 when he bought $94 worth of photographic equipment and began taking pictures, lugging along a camera of soap box size, a tripod, a dark tent, a nitrate bath and water holder . . . The beginning of his study, with his mother's kitchen sink his laboratory, of ways of making sensitive gelatine emulsion in which glass plates could be coated and used when dry, so that picture takers did not have to be pack bearers . . . The long nights he spent experimenting and the long days he fought off sleep on his bookkeeper's stool.

His first success when he built a machine for coating plates, drew $400 from his hoard, went to England and got a patent there . . . Then came the American patent and setting up business with six hands in a State Street loft after a boarder in his mother's home, a whip manufacturer named Henry A. Strong, became a partner of his young friend,

"Skinny," and put $1,000 in the infant Eastman Dry Plate Company.

Years of competition, struggle, setbacks . . . That time when he had to replace thousands of defective plates . . . Those nights he slept in a hammock in the factory and often cooked his meals there—when he bothered to take time out to eat . . . The constant experimenting that finally evolved transparent, flexible film and the roll holder . . . Then in 1888 the easy-to-handle camera he called the Kodak and the advertising campaign whose slogan, "You press the button and we do the rest" became a household word and everybody began taking pictures.

Years when his business was his life . . . The money heaped up and those who had muffed their chance to buy Kodak stock in the beginning cursed their timidity . . . The building of the Kodak Park film plant "way out in the Town of Greece" . . . The making of the world's first strip of positive film for motion pictures, the association with the wizard Edison, the birth of the movies and a lush new day for Eastman Kodak with the factories humming night and day in Rochester and in Harrow, England.

The money heaping up, more money than any bachelor would ever need . . . The gift under the name of "Mr. Smith," whose identity was not revealed for eight years, of two and one half millions to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology which had sent so many bright young men to Kodak . . . Long patent litigation, then the trust busters of the Wilson administration split up his company and he fought them tooth and nail because he rejected their ideology that big business, because it was big, was necessarily evil.

Then the World War and the magnate plowed up his

lawns to raise vegetables; he let rare plants freeze in his conservatory rather than waste precious fuel upon them; he led Liberty Loan drives while he denounced "slacker dollars" and he founded the War Chest which became the peacetime Rochester Community Chest . . . A growing sense of civic responsibility, systematic plans for giving away his fortune, for making his company progressive as well as prosperous . . . Emergence as Rochester's "first citizen," hobnobbing with notables at home and abroad . . . More time for travel, for recreation, for musicales in the East Avenue mansion, for planning the dispersal of his wealth.

"Doing it for Rochester" . . . Establishing the Bureau of Municipal Research, leading the successful fight for city manager government, launching the plan for a "Civic Center over the river" . . . princely gifts to the University of Rochester, to MIT and the Negro schools, Hampton and Tuskogee, founding of dental clinics in London, Brussels, Rome, Paris and Stockholm, patterned after the one he had fathered in Rochester.

Then the great experiment in "the enrichment of community life," centered in the Eastman Theater, the School of Music and the Philharmonic Orchestra . . . The experiment whereby the people were to absorb an appreciation of good music through the media of high grade motion pictures and a superb orchestra in an eight million dollar "temple of music" . . . But the public was not ready for so sudden an infusion of culture.

Hollywood had its commercial hatchets out and the public preferred the other type of movies . . . So the silver screen in time faded out but the fine school and the orchestra and the splendid auditorium where the people of his city could

hear the best music—they would endure long after he was gone.

Pleasant interludes of hunting in Africa and Alaska, winters at the North Carolina lodge, musicales and receptions in the mansion, famous guests, Edison, Pershing, Mary Garden . . . Retirement from active direction of his company . . . Adulation and honors for which the shy man cared little.

Then the last dark years when he was old and tired. He was lonely, too, for there were no young voices echoing through the bachelor's mansion . . . And there was the pain and the dark foreboding, the dread of useless years ahead . . . There came a time when he knew he could never again stalk big game, never again cook his meals in the open or share the good talk around the camp fire.

A day in March of 1932 and the headlines all over the world screamed: "Kodak King Dead by His Own Hand." The servants, who rushed into their master's bedroom after a shot was heard, found a note signed with those potent initials, "G. E." It was a masterpiece of simplicity for it said: "My work is done. Why wait?"

George Eastman's work lives after him. Monuments to his memory are the schools and public buildings in his own city and in far places that he gave; the mighty industry he founded which is the economic keystone of the city he loved and the philosophy he enunciated that "it is more fun to give money than to will it."

And there remain the memories for those who really knew him, a limited circle, who saw the intensely human being behind the seeming austere reserve that hid an innate shyness.

For there was Yankee blood in George Eastman's veins and Yankees are not demonstrative people.

Chapter 18

Twilight of a God

(The following story appeared on Dec. 2, 1945:)

Soon will come the twilight for a god.

The sturdy copper figure of Mercury that has stood, poised on the Rochester skyline since 1881, must really take flight at last.

The son of Jupiter must abdicate in favor of Mars. Which is to say that when the Community War Memorial is built, down will come City Hall Annex, chimney and all. Along with the commonplace yet lofty chimney must pass also the dramatic statue that has been its crowning glory through the rambling old building's various roles as tobacco factory, collar factory and city office building.

Even the most sentimental among us realize that old Mercury would hardly harmonize with the severely chaste lines of the new Memorial. But the Rochester skyline without Mercury, one foot atiptoe, the other upraised—it's unthinkable. It would be Boston without its sacred codfish, Auburn without Copper John.

Mercury has stood a long, long time in one place and his station has been a conspicuous one. He has come to be con-

sidered a symbol of Rochester, as well as an old and familiar friend.

This sentimentalist hopes that the Messenger of the Gods of Greek mythology will not be relegated to rusty oblivion on some forgotten shelf after he descends to earth. Surely in this city there are buildings with whose architecture the old statue would not clash. Build him a new pedestal if needs be. Please, Father Rochester, keep Mercury on the skyline somewhere!

On Jan. 29, 1881 the 54th Regiment Band blared out "Hail Columbia" and a crowd cheered as a brand new Mercury was unveiled atop a downtown tobacco factory.

The previous year William S. Kimball, the tobacco magnate, had begun his big factory on the "island," bounded by the Genesee River, the Carroll-Fitzhugh mill race and the old Erie Canal.

It was a historic site and near the very cradle of Rochester. The raceway followed the course of the primitive one that had led to Ebenezer Allen's 18th century mill. Across Court Street had stood the Blue Eagle Jail of song and story where the grandfather of Prime Minister MacKenzie King had been confined during the Canadian Patriot uprising in 1838. On the island had been housed the convicts from Auburn Prison who had helped build the Clinton Ditch and the Rochester Aqueduct.

Kimball operated on a lavish scale in the elegant 1880s. He had just built "Kimball Castle," the rococo mansion that stood until recent years at Troup and Clarissa Streets in the aristocratic Third Ward.

The tobacco manufacturer wished an eye-catching symbol to adorn his new factory. So he commissioned his brother-in-law, J. Guernsey Mitchell, a promising young artist, to de-

sign a statue of the Greek god Mercury in flight. Mitchell set to work on his drawings. Then he made a plaster model of Mercury. His "studio" was a canvas-surrounded shed in a yard at Park Avenue and Rowley Street.

When his model was completed, Mitchell turned it over to the John Siddons Iron Works, still in business in Water Street, where the 21 foot, 700 pound statue of copper plates riveted together was made.

Mercury was an all Rochester product, designed by a Rochester artist and made by Rochester craftsmen in a Rochester shop.

When the heroic figure was raised to its pinnacle, 182 feet above the level of the street, it was held in place by a copper rod. The sculptured face of Boreas formed the base to which the rod was fastened. Thus the messenger of the gods is literally a "mouthpiece" for the fierce god of the North Wind.

Mercury actually went aloft on Jan. 12, 1881. The Morning *Herald* told its readers that: "The statue was hoisted in pieces to the top of the chimney and after being put together was placed in position. . . . When completed, the standard supporting it will be roofed over and surmounted by an elegant railing. . . ."

The ceremonial unveiling of the statue 17 days later was a civic occasion. Admission to special ringside seats was by invitation. Reporters from the *Buffalo Courier* and the *Syracuse Standard* came to cover the event.

Here is the way the *Rochester Union and Advertiser* reported the debut of the winged god on the skyline:

"The unveiling of the fine copper statue of Mercury on the tower of the new Kimball factory was quite largely attended this morning. In addition to several hundred tickets of invitation issued, to which many prominent citizens re-

sponded in person, a large number of people congregated in streets and buildings in the vicinity.

"At 11 o'clock the guests had all arrived and were given places. The 54th Regiment Band, consisting of 20 pieces with Jacob Sauer as leader, was stationed on the bridge which connects the two wings of the factory at the rear and is only a few feet from the base of the tower.

"John Tuohey, John H. Jones and John Vogel of Siddons & Co. who made the metal of which the statue is formed, were assigned to climb the tower. At its base they removed the coverings. When they had been carefully fastened about with cords to hold them in their perilous positions, they quickly scaled the ladder on the south side of the pyramidical-shaped tower.

"As they reached the top they were greeted with cheers. At precisely 11:30, Guernsey Mitchell, who designed and modeled the figure, from his station on the bridge waved his handkerchief.

"In an instant the veil was rent in twain, slipping gracefully from the godlike limbs and Mercury stood unveiled. A loud cheer rent the air and a moment later the inspiring strains of 'Hail Columbia' floated upward to welcome the Messenger of the Gods on his lofty pedestal."

The "three Johns" who unveiled Mercury are no longer alive. John Tuohey, who lived on Lozier Street, used to like to tell reporters of his intimate association with the sentinel of the skyline.

In an interview in 1918, Tuohey, who was something of a steeplejack, told of being delegated by W. S. Kimball to take care of the statue. He made frequent trips up the ladder. He related that "in 1886 I shot fireworks from the pedestal. I guess there's no chance of Mercury taking a dive because

we put three balls of asphalt inside him, to sort of steady him down during his youth."

Through the liberal commission his brother-in-law had given him for designing the statue, Guernsey Mitchell was able to study art in Paris and lived to achieve international fame in his field. Meanwhile his earliest work continued to dominate the skyline of his home town.

Changes came to the building it adorned. The factory came to house the Kimball Division of the American Tobacco Company after Kimball sold his interests. After his death in 1903, it was purchased by Cluett-Peabody for a collar factory. That industry, which employed many women, folded after 20 years and for a time the rambling structure was vacant.

In 1924 one of those perennial movements for a new City Hall burst into bloom. The city administration planned to build on a Broad Street site and opposite the present City Hall which was dedicated in 1875.

George Eastman, the philanthropist-Kodak emperor, had other ideas. He was the chief advocate of a civic center in which public buildings would be grouped over and around the Genesee near Broad Street. To forestall erection of a City Hall elsewhere, he bought the abandoned collar factory and offered to lease it to the city for a nominal sum as an office building.

Eastman's desires prevailed—as they usually did in those days—and the old building took a new name, City Hall Annex. At Eastman's death the property passed to the University of Rochester which continued the leasing arrangement with the city.

Mercury watched all the changes unperturbed but age and exposure to the elements took their toll. In 1928 en-

gineers found that rust and corrosion were weakening the god's toehold and workmen climbed the chimney to repair the mound on which the Messenger had been "taking off" for so many years.

One who made periodic visits to Mercury's roost to check up on the copper god was the late William T. Redmond of the city maintenance staff. He told how Mercury lost one of his sandals back in the 1930s:

"A 'human fly' managed to hang a used automobile tire over Mercury's leg by using two long lengths of pipe and a rope. In doing so he apparently loosened a wing on the statue's sandal. Later it dropped off and never has been replaced."

Redmond helped take the tire from the affronted god's leg. In late years he was more intimate with Mercury than any other Rochesterian.

Mercury rules diverse realms. He is the legendary god of commerce, of eloquence, of traffic and of travelers, as well as the Messenger of the Gods and the son of the great Jupiter.

If he could only speak what a tale he could unfold. For nearly seven decades he has watched the shifting scene in the city below him.

Through gale and wintry blast, through hail and sleet and blazing heat, the greenish copper figure has stood guard over the skyline. He has watched the angry waters battering at the river's banks far below. He has seen his city prostrate before the wrath of the storm king. He has felt the heat of leaping flames as the fire demon ate at the heart of Rochester.

He has watched the boys march off to three wars; saw the people dancing in the streets when the bells rang out the tidings of peace and victory; he welcomed the boys home from the battlefronts and noted the gaps in the ranks.

The God of Commerce and of Traffic looked down for long years at the canal boats, drawn by horses and mules along the old towpath and in the later years heard the screech of the subway trains in the abandoned bed of the Clinton Ditch.

Mercury saw the horses yield to the darting motor cars in the streets below. He heard the excursion trains rumble out of the old Erie Station, Conesus bound, on bygone Summer afternoons.

And in a strange new age, the earth-bound courier of the gods has peered, a bit enviously, at the machines that whirred like great birds above his head.

Time was when Mercury's only rival on the skyline, save the church spires, was the ornate green tower atop Daniel Powers' block at the Four Corners.

In those days travelers approaching the city on the Genesee from almost any direction could see the son of Jupiter mounted on his own Olympus albeit it was only a factory chimney. The God of Travelers was a signpost in the sky.

Then newcomers came to challenge Mercury's reign on the high ramparts—the Kodak, Sibley and Lincoln-Alliance Bank towers and the modernistic Wings of Progress on the Genesee Valley Trust building.

But old Mercury kept his grip on the hearts of the people.

So, please, City Fathers, keep the familiar figure where it belongs, somewhere against the Rochester sky, a tradition, a symbol and an old, old friend.

* * *

(Many other stories in the same vein followed this one. All of them had the slogan, "Don't let Mercury down." The Copper God seemed to have a legion of friends. People wrote

letters to the newspapers urging that Mercury remain somewhere on the skyline. Former residents wrote from distant places, attesting their affection for the familiar friend of their younger days. School children presented petitions to the City Council. My file marked "Mercury" bulged.

(But it was all in vain. Despite some talk by city officials about putting the statue on a gate house of the Court Street dam, Mercury came down and, as I had feared, was "relegated to rusty oblivion."

(Thousands craned their necks on Sept. 19, 1951, when Mercury descended through a combination of acetylene torches, a tall crane, ropes and cables. The next morning the Messenger of the Gods was carted off to a city building in Edgerton Park. A few days later he was dumped into a corner of the city warehouse at Charlotte. There he has since remained in solitary exile.

(But as this is written, it seems certain that the familiar figure again will be raised on high. Plans for the huge new Civic Center, to rise along Exchange Street and the river, include the statue on a lofty pedestal in a riverside park which will border the cluster of government buildings.)

Chapter 19

A Carpetbagger's Memories

(Written for April 1, 1953)

Everybody knows that Wednesday will be All Fools Day. Nobody has pointed out that it will mark a momentous anniversary. The Mayor so far has kept his "whereases" in leash and has issued no proclamation.

It was on April 1, 1923 that this carpetbagger landed in this fair city. He figured he might stay a year at least. He is still here. So the April Fool joke seems to be on Rochester.

I have never kept a diary and memory is a fickle jade. Of my first impressions as a resident of the Flower City, which I had seen only three or four times before, I only recall that it seemed bleak, after New York. Spring came late to the Genesee in 1923. Talk about "the ice breaking up on the river" did not relieve the chilly aspect.

Some of the citizenry seemed to have absorbed their city's April frigidity. At least the man I hailed at what I learned later was the Four Corners and asked the way to *The Democrat and Chronicle* stared at me in silent, scornful unbelief and pointed to a big sign atop a building a block up the street.

Rochester has retained something of its New England heritage. Its people are not notably demonstrative nor are they particularly effusive toward strangers. You have to live in Rochester a while to know it. Then you never want to leave. Haven't I stayed here 30 years when I intended to linger only a few months?

The first person to greet me at the Democrat and Chronicle building then resplendent in a proud new "front" was pleasant enough. He was wiry, slightly-built Ed Hill, the elevator man. I am sorry Ed is not alive to share in this anniversary celebration. His comment would be apt—unless the fire engines happened to be going by. On such occasions his elevator was forgotten until he found out where the engines were bound.

But this story is wandering from its objective—an attempt to recapture something of the Rochester that I "discovered" 30 years ago—and is skidding into "personal memoirs." That shall cease herewith with the explanation that of my years in Rochester, 18 of them have been spent in the Democrat and Chronicle harness. There was a rather exciting 12-year interlude at St. Paul and Andrews Streets, where over the entrance to an iron store this inscription is still visible: "Journal-American Building."

The old files of this "newspaper over the river" have helped to refresh my memories of the events and setting of three decades ago.

Then as now, international affairs dominated the news. The lead story on page 1 of the first D. and C. I had any part in producing was datelined, "Essen, Germany" and told of the arrest of four Krupp Works directors for "inciting a tumult that cost the lives of nine men."

That Easter-All Fools Sunday in a Pittsburgh church the

masks were torn from the faces of six Ku Kluxers. Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover announced new wave length regulations intended to reduce radio interference. Radio was a new and ever swelling voice in the land in 1923.

Ironic, in view of what happened later, was this headline on an inside page:

HOOVER SHOWS
HOW TO AVOID
FUTURE PANICS

The biggest local headline stated that "Easter Chill Upsets Fashion Show." In those days much was made of the East Avenue Easter parade. Readers were also told that contracts were soon to be let for "electrifying the subway railroad to be built in the old canal bed." Rochester was all agog about its new subway, then under way, and waiting the day when the big thundering interurban cars would be off the streets and into the ditch. In 1923 the first trackless trolleys rumbled over the Driving Park Avenue bridge. Rochester was not afraid of bold experiments 30 years ago.

At the same time Rochester was bursting with pride over the magnificent new Eastman Theater which had been opened on Labor Day of 1922. On that Eastman screen that first week in April Richard Dix was starring in Hall Caine's "The Christian," to the accompaniment of high class music. Good movies plus good music spelled George Eastman's experiment in "the enrichment of community life."

Other movie attractions included Rudolph Valentino at the Rialto, Viola Dana at the Piccadilly and Constance Talmadge at the Victoria. At the Lyceum a now forgotten actor named Eugene O'Brien had the lead in a now forgotten play called "Steve." A girlie show, "The Giggles," was at the

The Grand Army on Parade in 1911 at Rochester Encampment

In "Aught One" Firehorses Charged over Cobblestones

Gayety. At the Corinthian burlesque yielded that Sunday to a matinee lecture by "Doctor" Alzamon Ira Lucas on "Vitalization and Regeneration," with the proceeds going to his Home Betterment Club. Shortly thereafter the "doctor" was in difficulty with the law.

That same Sunday at Pensacola, Fla., the Rochester Tribe under Stallings and Hapgood lost a Spring training exhibition game to the Cardinals led by Branch Rickey. On the Rochester roster were names whose praises the fans were to sing that season at the Bay Street ball park—Archdeacon, Merkle, Lake and Wisner among them.

In 1923 Rochester claimed a population of 318,000. It was an expansive era. New buildings were springing up on all sides. That year saw the completion of the Baptist Temple church-office building and of the new Masonic Temple, as well as the start of work on the huge Strong Memorial Hospital on the site of old Crittenden Park and its race track.

George Eastman, systematically giving away the Kodak millions he had fought so hard to amass, was planning greater things for a greater University of Rochester, then under the astute guidance of Rush Rhees, who had been a Baptist minister. Many Rochester knees were bent humbly to the bachelor Kodak King although the Eastman influence on Rochester's civic life had not yet reached its zenith.

Another powerful George, whose realm was politics, had died unexpectedly on a golf course the year before but the political machine that George Washington Aldridge had built on rolled on, with amiable James L. Hotchkiss trying to fill the shoes of "the Big Fellow." The Republicans had their mayor, impeccable business man Clarence D. Van Zandt, in City Hall and they controlled all the elective offices save one. In 1922 a Democrat, Meyer Jacobstein, who

had been a professor of economics and an expert in labor-management relations, had won an astounding victory in the East Side Congressional district. This master votegetter was to win again in 1924 and 1926.

Colorful politicos strode the stage in 1923—Jake Gerling with his eternal cigar, umbrella and bowler hat and his relentless war on the voting machine—Lawyer "Clip" Bostwick of the rakish hats and reedy voice, leader of the 10th Ward and perennial insurgent against the Republican organization—Bill Love cigars attested to the popularity of the district attorney, who as a baseball player had been the pride of the Bull's Head—choleric Dr. George W. Goler ruled the City Health Bureau with a rod of iron—Dr. Franklin W. Bock was carrying the banner of reform and making little headway.

It was the time of Prohibition, of the speakeasies, of the axe-swinging dry raiders, of the ale boats on the lake, of the trucks sneaking down from Canada in the night, of the hijacker, of the bootlegger, of the eye at the peep hole and of bathtub gin.

There was a Mullan-Gage dry law, authored by a Rochester State Senator and a Warsaw Assemblyman and Governor Al Smith was to sign the act repealing it—it was the heyday of Clinton N. Howard, "The Little Giant of Prohibition," in his preacher clothes, and of Grace Begy, who sued him for calling her place "a snake hole"—and the smart set went slumming at "Scully" Marino's Hartford Street joint.

It was the time of Rattlesnake Pete Gruber and his fabulous museum-saloon on Mill Street, of Frogleg George and his mule, of Jim Rawnsley who never wore a hat or coat, Winter or Summer; of Detective Captain Jack McDonald,

nemesis of criminals who would purr one minute and pounce the next, mangling the Queen's English all the while.

It was the heyday of the Centrals on the Armory basketball court and of Hughie Barrett at the piano keys, of the Upper and Lower Manhattans on Main Street, of Hall Bros. famous eatery on Front Street, of the old Odenbach Hofbrauhaus of pleasant memory on South Avenue. Thurston Road was "a long way out" and the corner of Dewey Avenue and the Ridge Road was a quiet crossroads.

It was the time of the flapper in her brief and scanty skirt, of the sheik in his raccoon coat and bell-bottomed trousers, when a badge of sophistication was a copy of Mencken's green-jacketed *American Mercury,* when Sinclair Lewis' new book, *"Babbitt,"* was anathema at the service club luncheons, when "Carolina in the Morning" and "Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Shean" were leading the song hit parade. It was that mad and merry time of the return to "normalcy"—when nothing was normal according to the old standards.

This has been but a sketchy picture of the Rochester I first knew 30 years ago and which has been home to me ever since. New actors have come on the stage and I think the older ones were more picturesque. Customs are as transitory as the seasons.

The basic things, which have won Rochester so many loyal "carpetbagger" subjects, are unchanged—the city's grand natural setting of river, canyon, waterfalls and big blue lake —its proximity to a countryside of rare fertility and many-sided charm—its physical attractiveness in comparison to other cities—the pride of its people in their homes and gardens, but above all the sense of well being that is the hallmark of Rochester, known far and wide as a "good town to live in."

Chapter 20

In "Aught One"

(Dated Jan. 1, 1951)

There are mathematically minded folks who insist that the 20th Century really began on Jan. 1, 1901 and not on the previous New Year's Day.

Be that as it may, we are swinging into the second half of an incredible century. We have lived in a stirring, revolutionary time. We have experienced so much and our memories are both grim and glorious.

My generation has lived in two different worlds. The world of "Aught One," as some old timers call it, bears little resemblance to the troubled world of 1951. To my generation was granted a boon denied to those who came after us. We were privileged to live—for a time—in a peaceful, secure, unhurried world before the first World War and before the new gadgets and the age of speed changed our whole way of life.

The year 1901 was ushered in to the music of sleigh bells, for it still was the horse and cutter time. The automobile was just emerging and was regarded as a fad for the rich. The idea of men flying machines was fantastic. Motion pic-

tures were in their infancy. There was no radio, no television, but there were talking machines with morning glory horns and cylindrical records.

There was war in the world but it did not engulf half the universe. The British were fighting the stubborn Boers in Africa and most Americans sympathized with the Boers. The United States had just won a none too glorious war with decrepit Spain and as a result had on its hands some troublesome island possessions. It was in 1901 that General Fred Funston finally captured the native leader Aguinaldo and ended the Philippine insurrection.

I was only in my seventh year when 1901 dawned but some of the events of that year are etched upon my memory. I remember that most of the people in my home village managed some time during the year to visit the Pan-American Exposition in nearby Buffalo. Some of them were in the Temple of Music that September day when President McKinley, a friendly man shaking hands with the people, was fatally wounded by an anarchist whose bandaged hand concealed a gun. I remember the ensuing public wrath against all anarchists, particularly a woman leader, Emma Goldman, who had once lived in Rochester.

After McKinley died on September 14 in one of the mansions on Buffalo's Delaware Avenue, the vice president, Theodore Roosevelt, the most spectacular figure of his time, came into power.

It was early in 1901 that Queen Victoria died. Still the era that was associated with her long reign lingered—for a while. That same year Carry Nation, the Kansas "hatchet woman," went on tour, smashing up saloons along the way and a dumpy, middle aged school-teacher named Anna Edson Taylor went over Niagara Falls in a barrel.

"The Gibson Girl" and "The Gibson Man," creations of Charles Dana Gibson's pen, were in full flower. George Barr McCutcheon's "*Graustark*" and "*The Crisis*" by Winston Churchill (of New Hampshire, not of England) were best sellers. Jim Jeffries was the heavyweight champion of the world and Larry Lajoie of Cleveland the leading batsman of the major leagues. Everybody was singing "*Hello Central, Give Me Heaven*" and "*Mighty Lak a Rose.*"

It was early in 1901, on January 8, that fire wrote a catastrophic chapter in Rochester annals. Early that bitter cold morn flames raced through the four-story Rochester Orphan Asylum in Hubbell Park where 110 children and most of the staff were sleeping. Despite heroic rescues by firemen and bystanders, 28 children and three staff people perished.

No one who ever saw the Orphanage fire will ever forget the horror of the scene—the screams of the trapped children —the small bodies hurtling down from flame-wreathed windows, to lie on the snowy lawn until wagons and hacks bore them to the morgue—the pathetic identification of the victims there and many were not orphans but children placed in the institution by their families—one veteran and hitherto hardened newspaper man was so affected he could not write his story.

That year, Rochester, then a city of some 162,000 with the Irish and German predominant among its foreign-born, saw more happy events. The Free Dental Dispensary and the Baden Street Settlement were founded and work was begun on the new East High School.

Among portents of a new day were the first automobile display advertising in city newspapers and the granting of a Saturday half holiday to clerks in the stores.

Six days after Queen Victoria's death, a round-faced young

British M.P., a former war correspondent, spoke in the Lyceum Theater. Winston Spencer Churchill was not a big name then and the audience was sparse, although Mayor George A. Carnahan introduced the speaker as a grandson of Leonard Jerome, the publisher who had once lived on Rochester's South Fitzhugh Street.

The next night a far larger crowd flocked to the Lyceum where a young actress named Ethel Barrymore starred in "*Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines.*"

* * *

Back in 1901 these things were commonplace and *my* generation will remember them, although they will be regarded as "quaint" and will be utterly unfamiliar to the younger folk:

Raines Law hotels, Keeley Cures for alcoholics, covered bridges, netting on carriage horses to ward off flies in Summer; buffalo robes, soap stones, hitching sheds, wood sheds, hanging lamps in the living room that were let down on a chain; kerosene lamps with wicks that had to be trimmed; kitchen stoves that had to be blacked; the cakewalk and ragtime, and steamboats on the lakes and bays.

People froze their own ice cream and baked their own bread. Every Winter the ice was cut on the lakes and ponds and on the Canal widewaters and the ice houses filled. Most groceries came in bulk. Eggs were 14 cents a dozen and butter 25 cents a pound. And $1 a day was the standard wage for labor that worked a six-day, 60-hour week.

It was the time of the tally-ho and the livery rig; of the hammock and the summer boarder; of the "family entrance," the free lunch and "rushing the growler" in the saloons; of the jew's harp and the mouth organ; of the handlebar mus-

tache and the mustache cup; of the "Eyetalian" hand organ grinder and his monkey; of the Irish cop in the white helmet walking his beat; of the straight razor, the strop and the shaving paper for the average man and for the "upper crust" the individual shaving cup with the customer's name or initials on it in the rack at the barber shop.

It was the time when Charlotte on Lake Ontario was "the Coney Island of Western New York" and mules and horses trudged along the old towpath of the Erie Canal. It was the time of the wheelmen, the bicycle clubs and the sidepaths, the circus parade, the toll gate and the horse-drawn street sprinkling carts. It was the time of the fire horses charging over cobblestone streets and the time of the open trolleys and the discordant din of the flat wheels in the night.

It also was the time of the torchlight political parade and the marching clubs, of the waning power of the Grand Army of the Republic, of the greased pig and the greased pole on the Fourth of July, of the free pass on the railroad for newspaper editors, of "Mr. Dooley," the Alger and Henty books, the *Youth's Companion* for boys, the *Pansy* stories for girls and Palmer Cox's "Brownies" for every youngster.

In those days most men wore a heavy wool suit in all seasons with a blue serge "for nice," that is for Sundays, funerals and gala days; derbies (for nine months of the year) and straw "skimmers" (from Memorial Day to Labor Day); high collars, sometimes of the wing variety and sometimes of celluloid; shirt studs that always rolled far under the bed; armbands and massive chains strung across the midriff and anchored to a heavy gold watch in a vest pocket.

Milady wore voluminous skirts that literally swept the street; wide brimmed hats that caught the breezes; shirtwaists with high collars; black stockings, often of cotton;

corsets and a multitude of petticoats. The wasp waist was the vogue. And no nice female ever smoked or drank in public.

It was a serene and unhurried time, an era of simple pleasures, when people had time to sit in rocking chairs on roomy front porches and there always was an extra plate or two laid on the dining table for the guests who might drop in.

Now in this up-and-atom age we have a lot of labor-saving machines and marvelous entertainment gadgets. We did not have them in "Aught One" but we did not miss them. For we had never even dreamed of them.

We did have a peace of mind and a sense of security that we have not had these long war-shadowed years. Let us hope that a future generation may have these blessings—and all the push-button gadgets too.

Chapter 21

The "Hen Convention"

An affront rankles long in a woman's heart. Which is softening the words of Congreve: "Hell has no fury like a woman scorned."

Otherwise there might not have convened in the village of Seneca Falls on July 19, 1848 the first women's rights rally in American history.

The story goes back eight years before that, to London and the world anti-slavery convention of 1840. In that day women under the old English Common Law were an inferior and subject class with hardly any rights. In 1840 the world had heard only faint stirrings of the long feminist revolution that was to come. In 1840 the Middles Ages still lived insofar as women were concerned.

Still the American delegation to the London convention included several distinguished women who were active in the abolitionist movement. One was Lucretia Mott, a cultured and articulate Philadelphia Quakeress. In London she met young Elizabeth Cady Stanton, honeymooning with her lawyer husband, Henry B. Stanton, then of Johnstown, N. Y. He was a delegate to the convention.

The American women found they had crossed the ocean to attend a convention dedicated to the end of human bondage only to see their credentials rejected and to be barred

from the proceedings by the men. Furthermore, as a crowning indignity, they were forced to sit in a balcony behind a curtain, shut off from public gaze.

Mrs. Mott and Mrs. Stanton walked out of the hall, speechless with indignation. They discussed the calling of a women's rights convention once they were back in America. They met occasionally, corresponded, and kept the idea alive without taking any definite action.

In 1848, a year that saw New York State pass a law giving married women certain property rights, the two friends met again. Mrs. Mott had come to Western New York to attend a meeting of Hicksite Quakers and to visit her sister, Mrs. Martha Wright, in Auburn. Nearby was the home of the Stantons, who had moved to Seneca Falls. There the two women returned to the topic they had first discussed in London, the calling of a convention to proclaim a whole new status for women.

Seated around a table in the Waterloo home of Quaker Richard Hunt, five crusaders—Mrs. Mott, Mrs. Stanton, Mrs. Wright, Jane Hunt and Mrs. Mary Ann McClintock—drafted this announcement which appeared in the semi-weekly *Seneca County Courier* of July 14, 1848:

SENECA FALLS CONVENTION

WOMEN'S RIGHT CONVENTION—A Convention to discuss the social, civil and religious condition and rights of women will be held in the Wesleyan Chapel at Seneca Falls on Wednesday and Thursday, the 19th and 20th of July current; commencing at 10 o'clock a.m. During the day the meeting will be exclusively for women, who are earnestly invited to attend. The public generally are invited to be present the second day when Lucretia Mott of Philadelphia and other ladies and gentlemen will address the convention.

Five days later, crowds on foot and in carriages made their way to the Wesleyan Chapel. When the leaders of the convention arrived, they found the door locked. A youthful nephew of Mrs. Stanton who later became a professor at Yale was hoisted through an open window to unbar the door and the church was quickly filled.

There were many men in the crowd and although the first session had been advertised "for women only," a hasty council around the altar decided not only to let the men stay but to invoke their aid in the proceedings.

So tall, dignified James Mott, Lucretia's husband in Quaker garb, was made presiding officer. Among the several speakers was Frederick Douglass, the Negro leader then publishing his abolitionist newspaper in Rochester.

The instigators of the "revolution" had drawn up a manifesto modeled on the American Declaration of Independence. For the words, "the present King of Great Britain," the general term, "Man," was substituted. Then the Declaration went into a long recital of wrongs.

The tyrant Man, the manifesto charged, withheld from women the right of suffrage and compelled her to submit to laws in the formation of which she had no voice. He made her, if married, civilly dead in the eyes of the law. He took from her all rights in property, even to the wages she earned. He made her morally an irresponsible being, compelled her to promise obedience to her husband who was to all intents and purposes her master.

There were other grievances against the tyrant man. He taxed single women, if property owners, to support a government which did not otherwise recognize them. He barred to women the avenues to wealth and distinction which he enjoyed, leaving her only unprofitable employments. He

denied her opportunities for education; gave her a subordinate position in the church; supported a double code of morals and "usurping the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claimed the right to assign her a sphere of action when that belongs to her conscience and her God."

On top of this ringing manifesto the Seneca Falls convention adopted 11 other resolutions, demanding, among other things, the right to free education, equality with men in business and the professions, the right of free speech and to participate in public affairs and the right to vote. Only the last named was not adopted unanimously.

Sixty-eight women and 33 men signed the resolutions. Later on some of them repudiated their signatures when a great storm of ridicule broke upon the heads of the revolutionists of "the Hen Convention."

Generally the press was unsparing in its derision of the women who had dared to assert their independence. The *Rochester Democrat* commented that "the great effort seemed to bring out some new impracticable, absurd and ridiculous proposition, and the greater the absurdity the better."

But James Gordon Bennett's *New York Herald* declared that "we are much mistaken if Lucretia Mott would not have made a better president than some of those who have lately tenanted the White House."

The rebels against the status quo found the two days of the Seneca Falls convention not sufficient for the steam they had to let off. So they adjourned, to meet again in Rochester in two weeks.

The meeting had been well publicized and on Aug. 2, 1848, the Unitarian Church, then in North Fitzhugh Street, was filled. Against the advice of Mrs. Mott and Mrs. Stanton, a woman, Abigail Bush, had been chosen to preside. It

was feared that women's inexperience in public meetings and their ignorance of parliamentary law might cause the gathering to break up in confusion, for there were hecklers and hostile skeptics in the crowd.

But when some of the women secretaries could not make themselves heard, the strong clear voice of Sarah Burtis, used to calling her school children to order, took charge and after that there was no hitch in the proceedings. It also is recorded that Mrs. Bush "presided with dignity and poise."

There were many speeches and more resolutions, one of them directed at the low wages paid women in Rochester. Among those who attended were Daniel Anthony, his wife and their daughter, Mary. Another daughter named Susan, a strong limbed young woman of 28 with a determined chin, was teaching school in Canajoharie. The glowing accounts her family gave of the women's right meeting impressed her so much she became a convert to the cause—and for many years was its foremost leader.

It was 81 years after the Seneca Falls and Rochester meetings before woman achieved her supreme objective, the right to vote. But during those years, faced by ridicule and hostility, step by step, she improved her status until most of the grievances against the tyrant Man, recited in the Declaration of Independence of 1848, were no more.

The old Wesleyan chapel in Seneca Falls is an automobile sales room now and on the side of the building is a plaque that tells that the first mighty blow for the emancipation of women was struck there at the "Hen Convention" more than a century ago.

Chapter 22

Eight Sides to the Story

Reminders of an architectural fad of a century ago, a few eight-sided buildings still dot the Western New York landscape.

Old age and the elements are taking their toll of some of the octagonal structures. Others are sturdy and well kept. A few are downright elegant.

Most of them were built as residences but there are also eight-sided barns and carriage houses. In Wayne County an octagonal cobblestone building served for years as a blacksmith shop. Above Seneca Lake near Hector stands the old wooden "Round Schoolhouse," now a dwelling.

Octagonal architecture goes back to the Middle Ages. On New York Avenue N.W. in Washington, D. C. is an octagonal structure built in 1800. It is now the home of the American Institute of Architects. As early as 1813 there was an eight-sided house in Richmond, Vt. But the "octagons" were few and far between in this country—until 1849.

It was a native Western New Yorker who made the octagonal style a nation-wide fad. The father of the vogue, which had its heyday in the 1850s, was Orson Squire Fowler, the Cohocton farm boy who went to New York and became the high priest of phrenology, the once popular "science" of

reading character by the contours of the human cranium. Through lecturing, publishing books and "reading heads," Fowler amassed a fortune and national fame.

In 1849 the phrenologist, impressed by an octagonal house he saw in Wisconsin (there were already some in his native Western New York), put out a book titled *A Home for All or the Gravel Wall and Octagonal Mode of Building.* It cited as among the advantages of the style of construction: Conservation of heat, providing more sunlight during daylight hours and saving steps for the housewife.

The distinctiveness of the design caught on. After the Fowler book came out, at a time when phrenology was popular, the new type of buildings began to cast eight-sided shadows on the American scene.

They were built of frame, of brick and of stone—and of the gravel or "grout" walls recommended by Fowler. This was a mixture of lime, small stones and sand.

Most of the early octagons were crowned by an eight-sided cupola in the center of the building. In many cases a porch was built around the whole structure. The main rooms were generally square or rectangular, with the pie-shaped corners utilized for hallways, closets, cupboards.

Orson Fowler built the most pretentious and most publicized of them all, on a knoll near Fishkill in the Hudson River country. It was four stories high with a glass-roofed cupola that towered 80 feet above the ground. It had 100 rooms and after it was completed in 1859, it was the showplace of the region.

But seepage from a cesspool carried typhoid germs through the impractical grout walls and several persons were made ill. After that only spiders and rats lived in the mansion which became known as "Fowler's Folly." It was razed in

Geneva's Elegant "Octagon"

Horse and Buggy Days at Hemlock Fair

1897 as a hazard to the spectators who kept flocking through the vacant building.

Carl Carmer, the author, delving into the history of octagonal architecture, found that there were eight-sided public buildings in Italy in the Middle Ages, as shown in old paintings. Carmer has more than an academic interest in the subject. He lives in a big, porch-girdled, domed and mosque-like octagonal house at Irvington on the Hudson.

Few of the "eight-siders" were built in this century. Maybe that accounts for the wide interest in them. People "collect" them and photograph them as a hobby, just as others specialize in the remaining covered bridges.

The New York State Historical Association has published a brochure, listing the remaining octagonal buildings in this state. It was compiled by Miss Ruby Rounds of the association staff, largely through data gathered by an indefatigable "collector," Stephen Leonard Sr. of Oneida.

Armed with this list, the Merrills on their pilgrimages into the countryside have made a special spare-time project of seeking out the octagons. We even turned up one not on the state list. That one, in Sodus Bay, is accessible only by boat.

We found it hard to ascertain the exact age of the eight-siders. Many of them are on side roads, some in villages, few in the larger cities. We talked with many of the people who live in them and found them invariably cordial to the unbidden guests and not visibly annoyed by strangers coming to their doors. Most of them take pride in their unusual domiciles. We have had fun traveling "the Octagonal Trail" although we have covered only the eight-siders in our own region.

* * *

We were privileged to see at close range one of the most elegant octagonal residences in these parts, the stately brick home that crowns the hill at Castle and West North Streets in Geneva. We had often admired it at a distance—the curb—and we were tickled when its owner, Mrs. Jessie Smith Peck, invited us into her distinctive residence, mellow with its own traditions of 103 years.

Into it went the first bath tub in the region. For years a strange silence dwelt in that house. For its occupants were a deaf mute couple who spoke only the sign language.

"The Octagon," as it is known in Geneva, was built in 1853 for a newly-wed couple named Moore. It cost $12,000 and that was a lot of money in those days. It rose on land owned by Nehemiah Denton who had many other acres, including those now occupied by the New York State Experiment Station just around the corner from the Octagon. Denton married Moore's sister. Both he and his wife were deaf mutes.

So the story goes, it was Denton money that built and furnished the Octagon. The Moores lived there until 1873 when the Dentons moved in. The place remained in the Denton family until 1920 when Mrs. Peck's late parents, Dr. and Mrs. Fred A. Smith, bought it.

In Geneva, described in early times as "an elegant and salubrious village," there were many mansions but it was the Octagon that had the first bath tub. Actually there were two tubs and water was piped from a spring two miles away for the private supply of the eight-sided house.

There are thousands of dollars worth of wrought iron in the Octagon. Iron steps lead to the main or second floor entrance from Castle Street. Iron railings surround the second and third floor porches which encircle the house. The iron came from Italy and there is a tale that it was acquired

rather cheaply because the owner of the ship that brought it to America needed it for ballast.

A feature of the Octagon is the solid mahogany spiral staircase which runs up three stories from the first floor to the eight-sided cupola on the roof, piercing the exact center of the house. The mahogany rails and spindles are hand-carved. From the cupola one can see on a clear day two Finger Lakes, nearby Seneca and distant Cayuga.

The 14-room residence, with its 12-foot ceilings and windows that reach from floor to ceiling and its pine floors, had lavish accessories. The two fireplaces of black marble with mother of pearl insets are still there. Gone are the huge chandeliers which once hung down from the ceiling. The Octagon contains many heirlooms of Mrs. Peck's family and its furnishings would make the blood of an antique collector dance.

There are two other octagonal houses in Ontario County, neither as elegant as the Geneva landmark, although one of them once housed a famous Upstate politician. That is the brown frame house which has stood since before the Civil War at 116 Gorham Street in Canandaigua. Senator John Raines, a power in Republican politics around the turn of the century, lived there from 1872 until 1912.

The other Ontario County eight-sider is the batten and board type residence at West and Lyons Streets in the village of Naples, flanked by vineyards and in the shadow of magnificent hills. It is owned by Mrs. Frank Widmer of the Naples wine-making family, who rents the property.

* * *

Wayne County has four octagonal buildings within its borders. We toured the interior of one of them, the staunch,

century old stucco house with the green blinds and the inevitable cupola, on the Ridge Road (not the new Route 104) about one mile west of Williamson.

It is a well-kept and comfortable domicile. We were told that old O. S. Fowler was right about the sunlight, the conservation of heat and the step-saving features of eight-sided homes. The rooms in the octagons have unusual angles, providing for odd-shaped closets and nooks. They must be a paperhanger's nightmare. Our visit to the Williamson house was crowned by a trip up the winding stairway to the octagonal cupola which commands a fine view of the orchard country.

The ring of hammer on anvil and the murmur of the bellows have long been stilled in the eight-sided cobblestone building in little Alloway beside the Canandaigua Outlet, just south of Lyons on the Geneva road. It is more than 100 years old and for years Clyde Friend plied the smith's trade within its eight walls. Now it serves as a storehouse. It is a tribute to the craftsmanship of the cobblestone masons for it is still stout and plumb.

The compilers of the list of the state's octagonal buildings can hardly be blamed for missing the one on Charles Point—for it is accessible only by boat.

Charles Point is a sylvan Summer colony between Lake Ontario and Sodus Bay on what is currently a peninsula but which becomes an island when the big lake goes on one of its high water binges. In theory the Point is linked to the mainland by the thin sandbar known as Crescent Beach. But don't try to reach Charles Point on foot or by automobile unless you can walk on water on have pontoons on your car.

The octagonal building on Charles Point is one of the newer ones. It was built in 1900 by Seymour Scott, Lyons

malt magnate, to please his dashing Vermont-born wife. It follows the style of a Dutch windmill and locally is called "The Tower." Its first story is of native stone. The other three are of wood, painted a gleaming white. In recent years a frame wing has been added to the first floor.

It was built as a "playhouse" for the Scotts and their guests. It included a music room which still has pictures of Wagner and Bach on its walls. There also was a card room, a billiard room and a library. The beams are of heavy oak and its walls are paneled. It has a fine curving stairway. There is a "widow's walk" around the second story and a rounded dome atop the "play house."

"The Tower," built like a Dutch windmill to please the fancy of a malt baron's bride 56 years ago, is used by the Donald Hogans, its present owners, as a guest house. The Rochester Hogans have a summer home directly in front of it on the bay. The octagonal house is on high ground and can be seen from the mainland.

Also in Wayne County is the Gillette octagonal house in Clyde at 273 Glasgow Street. With good reason it is known as "the Gillette house" for the Gillette family has lived in it for three quarters of a century.

The eight-sided frame house, to which an ell and enclosed porch were added years ago, was built around 1873. Its first occupant was a Charles Bissell, a maker of wooden chopping bowls. It was on land owned by John Gillette, who shortly moved from the adjoining brick house into the "octagon." The Gillettes once owned all the land between the present high school and the South Butler Road.

After John Gillette, his son, John H. and his wife, Grace, occupied the house. John H. Gillette died recently and his widow lives in the eight-sided homestead. She said that years

ago she found an assortment of wooden chopping bowls in the attic. Each had some small defect, so Bissell had tossed them aside, although all were useable.

* * *

There is only one eight-sided house in Monroe County and that is of relatively recent vintage. It possibly is the newest octagonal residence in Upstate New York.

It is a summer home at Lighthouse Beach on Lake Ontario in the Town of Parma and it was built between 1919 and 1927 by an elderly artist, Aylesworth B. Haines. In it he carried out his idea that "all art work is composed of round radiating and curved lines." Everything about this lakeside frame house is eight-sided, the roof with its eight cornices, each housing a flower box; the chimney, the fireplace.

A few miles to the west and not far from Lake Ontario is the white house with the vertical boards and old-fashioned blinds at the end of Bills Road in the Town of Carlton, Orleans County. It was built in the early 1860s by Henry Hobbs. For many years it was the home of Joseph Henry Clement. Recently I received a letter from his daughter, Mary Clement Madison of Los Angeles, in which she recalled that she was born and married in that eight-sided house. The present occupants, the Robert Warrens, are attached to their distinctive domicile.

The other odd-sided house in Orleans County is on the East Lake Road in the Town of Yates near the hamlet of Shadigee and within sight of Ontario's waves. Its occupants, the Henry Bauns, will tell you it is a six-sided, not an eight-sided, structure and a checkup will prove they are correct. The frame house, painted white and with a pillared porch, a Colonial touch, was built some time after 1830, the date

that pioneer Godfrey Tarbox took title to the farm from the Holland Land Company. His son, Judson, inherited it in 1884. Locally it is called the Tarbox place.

A rear porch has been added in recent years. We were told that the house once had a cupola. The low second story with the rectangular windows is unfinished. Mrs. Baun said that before the first floor was remodeled, there were three six-sided rooms downstairs. Now there is only one.

* * *

To say there are three octagonal buildings "standing" in Livingston County is a bit of an exaggeration. For two eight-sided houses are disintegrating and may not be long on the scene. The third octagon, a barn, is holding up well.

Probably the oldest of the eight-siders in Western New York is the stone house on the Clark Road in the Town of Conesus, a mile and a half northeast of Conesus village, which is said to have been erected in 1819. It was built by Davenport Alger who settled in the township in 1805 and was its first supervisor. The old house still belongs to the Alger clan. The present owner is Gordon Alger, Conesus farm implement dealer. Until three years ago he rented it.

Once it was a stately place with its colonial front and surrounded by a picket fence, as shown in an old pen drawing which Mrs. John Alger, mother of Gordon, said was made by a wandering artist. Now the old house is in a sorry way. The stone has fallen from its sides in places and has been replaced by boards, giving it a patched look.

The one-story octagonal house of wood frame, covered with stucco, on the Cowan Road in the Town of York, close to the Genesee County line, has been vacant since 1927. It was built around 1837 by a Yankee settler named Hurlburt.

It was elegant in its day, with its interior finish of soft pine. Now it is a storehouse for farm feed and the whole place is sagging away. There's something sad about a house that isn't lived in any more, a silent house that once knew life and laughter—whether it has eight sides or the conventional four.

Standing up well against the years is the eight-sided barn with vertical brown boards on the Coe Road in the Town of Livonia. It was built by one of the Coes after whom the highway is named. The present owner is Marvin Rath and the barn is used for storage.

* * *

One of the most attractive of the remaining eight-sided residences in Western New York is in the aptly-named Pleasant Valley, one mile west of Hammondsport.

The big stone house of the Leonard P. Woods stands on a ridge, silvery and cameo-like, against a frame of green and wooded hill. It is on the old Bath-Hammondsport highway, that romantic road above which, like baronial castles of old, squat the massive stone wineries that have made the Keuka Lake Country famous. It faces the broad green valley where in 1908 native son Glenn Hammond Curtiss climbed into his crate-like "June Bug" and made the first public airplane flight in America.

The octagonal house was built in 1859 by Timothy Younglove, son of one of the first settlers in the Pleasant Valley. A surveyor as well as a farmer, Timothy laid out the Bath-Hammondsport plank road.

He disregarded Orson Fowler's recommendations for "grout" walls in that into his octagonal home he put plenty of large flat native stones, not pebbles. The house he built is standing staunch after 97 years.

When Mrs. Wood was asked if she preferred an eight-sided house to the conventional type, she replied: "Why, I have never lived in any other kind. You see, I was born in this house."

She is the great-granddaughter of Timothy Younglove and her children are the fifth generation of the line to live in the octagonal homestead.

Once a horse barn and a smoke house, both of eight sides, stood in the rear of the octagonal house. The big flood of 1935 turned the little stream that murmurs down from the glen on the hill into a raging torrent which swept away the horse barn. The smoke house survived the flood but was taken down a few years ago.

Two wings and a porch were added to the dwelling in the 1880s but they are in character. When the big front doors of the 20-room house are open, the graceful, half circle walnut stairway is visible from the road. On the odd-angled stairway room is the original wall paper. It is of a handsome golden design and still in good condition after nearly a century.

Under the open cupola, which has a skylight, is a second floor central room with seven bedrooms grouped about it. The cupola is supported by slanting cantilever beams extending from the main walls. A small airspace extends above the ceilings of the surrounding rooms, air conditioning of the vintage of 1859. Mrs. Wood said that because of the construction of the cupola, it is hard to keep plaster on the domed ceiling of the central room.

The walls of the 97-year-old Hammondsport house are over 18 inches thick. The grounds are well shrubbed and trim. The setting is picturesque. The view is superb. The

Leonard P. Wood farm home in the Pleasant Valley is one of the finest octagonal houses we have seen.

The story of another eight-sided house in Steuben County is less happy. That frame house, about a mile south of the village of Prattsburg and on the road to Bath, was built about 1852 by Henry Hopkins, a millwright and Prattsburg's first town clerk. According to local tradition, fugitive slaves were hidden in the house during the days of the Underground Railway.

The millwright built a tasteful house, painted white with green blinds at its deep windows, with a gracious old-fashioned doorway and a porch encircling it. Of course it has a cupola and a curving stairway. It stands in the shade of spreading maples and behind a short stone wall.

For more than 25 years it was the home of Mrs. Mary Neff. A nephew lived with her. Early one February morning in 1955 they were awakened by an explosion. Smoke quickly filled the house. Mrs. Neff, then 89, and her nephew escaped. Volunteer firemen saved most of the contents of the first floor but the second story was wrecked.

"Aunt Mary" Neff went to live with relatives in the village and since then the eight-sided house has remained just as the fire left it, a pathetic sight. Mrs. Neff still owns it. Even in its present state, the 104-year-old house retains considerable charm and dignity.

High on a hill overlooking the moody waters of Seneca Lake, a mile northwest of Hector, stands the old "Round Schoolhouse." It is very old, possibly going back to 1820, according to local historian Glenn L. Mickel. Until four years ago it was a district school. Now it is the remodeled residence of the Dwight Bells and a cozy home it is.

Its long career as a temple of learning is recalled by a

blackboard still in one of the rooms and by a couple of globes once used by geography classes and some school books Mrs. Bell found in the attic. The "entry," where once stood the water pail with the tin dipper, now is a hallway. Once the teacher stood in the center of the room beside the pot-bellied stove with the pupils grouped around him—or her.

Legends and tradition surround the Round Schoolhouse: Oldtimers on the hill tell about the boy who many years ago died in the school before he could be extricated from a window which had fallen on his neck.

The trend toward consolidation and smaller farm families combined to doom the district school four years ago, despite efforts of some people on the hill to keep it open. Generations of folks in Schuyler County, some of them in their nineties, remember the eight-sided schoolhouse at the forks of the road where they learned the three Rs.

Around 1855 Myron T. Hamlin, a dry goods merchant of the village, built on a 10-acre lot on Clinton Street in Penn Yan a two-story octagonal carriage house with a shuttered cupola. He had planned to erect a house on the lot, but, so the story goes, his family wanted to live nearer the center of town. So for nearly 20 years the eight-sided barn stood alone on the property.

In the late 1870s the premises passed to Darius Adams Ogden, the first United States Consul to Hawaii. He gave as a wedding present to his son, Darius, Jr., half of the lot and the present handsome house, now the home of John T. Andrews, head of the Walkerbilt Woodworking plant, rose on the hill and the carriage house was moved to its present location in the rear of the residence. Andrews said that on the second floor of the octagonal barn are pegs on which harnesses once hung. The building now serves as a garage

and storage place. It is a handsome structure in a coat of white—even if it has housed only horses, carriages and automobiles.

* * *

"The Octagon Trail" led to the sturdy frame house on the hill at 57 South Main Street in the college town of Alfred. For nearly 75 years the octagonal house was occupied by members of one family. Elisha Potter built it around 1850 and after Elisha, his son Alonzo lived there. Henry C. Hunting bought it in 1923. Since 1947 Hunting has rented it as a two-family apartment. The Alfred house has the cupola, surrounding porch, curving stairway and two large downstairs rectangular rooms characteristic of the octagons of its era.

On Elm Street in the Allegany County village with the heart-warming name of Friendship stands the big green octagonal house, built around the Civil War time by Dr. Erastus Hyde. The Hydes lived there for many years. In recent years it has had several owners. Once a porch encircled the entire house but part of it has fallen down. The new owners, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Wakefield, are fixing up the interior. The Hydes, who were ardent Spiritualists, would be glad to know that, for they were mighty proud of their eight-sided home.

Three miles from my birthplace, on Park Street in the village of Arcade, Wyoming County, is an octagonal house built in the 1920s—and not in the elegant Fowler tradition. It is of stone, patched with cement, and with several wooden additions. Its eight sides are not of equal width.

The only eight sider in populous Erie County rose the year that Fowler's book came out, 1849. It stands in its dignified coat of green, with cupola, English basement and porches encircling two of its three stories, at Main Street

and Park Place in the village of Akron. It has several unusual features, including a corkscrew chimney, supposedly to keep sparks from flying and shutters with louvres set vertically and horizontally for better control of sunshine. It has 22 rooms, 15 odd-sized closets or alcoves, a winding stairway and a large fireplace in the basement.

Its owner is as distinguished as his octagonal house. He is Clark J. Twinn, widely traveled lawyer, historian and onetime U. S. attorney in the territory of Alaska. He practiced law in Buffalo for many years before returning to his native village, where he bought the octagon house in 1940, opened a law office and became Newstead Town Historian. He still practices law but two years ago he had to give up his historian duties. Two years ago Clark Twinn lost his eyesight—but not his indomitable spirit, his good humor nor his interest in the world about him. It is a rare treat to talk with this man who observed so much in his long lifetime—before the shadows fell.

The green octagon house was built by an Indian agent and grain buyer named Charles B. Rich for his fourth wife. She admired one they saw on a downstate honeymoon. The Akron house has had only two owners beside Rich and Twinn. It was the residence of Charles A. Clark, superintendent of the Akron Cement Works, once the village's leading industry and now extinct, from 1868 to 1882. The house belonged to William R. Gillings and his widow between 1882 and 1939. A famous man lived in the eight-sided house as a boy, Twinn said. He was Homer S. Cummings, attorney general in the Franklin D. Roosevelt cabinet and a onetime chairman of the Democratic National Committee. His father, Uriah Cummings, was superintendent of the cement works in the village and rented the house for a short time.

Nowadays the Twinns live mostly in the English basement of the octagonal house.

* * *

In the Rochester area are several polygonal structures other than octagonal. The most interesting is the twelve-sided "Roundhouse" on the Hillside estate near Wyoming. It stands beside the mansion, the central part of which was built in 1827.

The "Roundhouse" was erected in 1850 by Dr. Pliny Hayes who sought to capitalize on a "never failing spring" on the property and established a sanitarium there in the heyday of the water cure. He built the twelve-sided building, which has a diameter of 75 feet, as a gymnasium and recreational place for his guests. It is said to have once housed a bowling alley.

The water cure did not prosper and in 1855 the property was acquired by Benjamin F. Avery, Louisville plow manufacturer whose wife, Susan Look, was a native of Wyoming. Their daughter, Lydia Avery Coonley Ward, a Chicago society leader and a patron of the arts, in the early years of this century maintained at Hillside an unusual Summer colony. She gathered about her people of literary and artistic bent, most of them young folks. In 1914 Mrs. Ward established a summer school at Hillside, not only for her guests and their children but for villagers, young and old.

During the period of this unusual cultural experiment, the twelve-sided building, which had been cut up into many rooms, served as a guest house, a class room and the scene of the harvest festival in the Fall.

After Mrs. Ward's death in 1924, Hillside was for 15 years the Summer home of the W. Martin Griffiths of Toronto.

Then it was purchased by its present occupants, Raymond T. Jones, Buffalo industrialist and his wife, who was the soul of graciousness to a couple of strangers.

A central pole, with radiating beams like the spokes of a wheel, supports the 106-year-old round building, now used only for storage. In the center of the "Roundhouse" is a semicircular bench around a table, which may go back to the building's schooldays.

And there is the nine-sided brick coachhouse on another distinguished estate, Belvidere, on the Genesee near Angelica, and all manner of more ordinary but odd-sided structures in these parts.

Getting farther away from home, on the grounds of Elmira College is the eight-sided study where Mark Twain wrote so many of his matchless tales. It has been moved downtown from the hill where Mark spent so many busy, happy hours.

The State Historical Association can delete from its list of remaining eight-sided buildings the old frame house, known locally as the Bacon place, which stood for probably a century on the west side of Fairhaven or Little Sodus Bay in Cayuga County. When we looked for it in the Summer of 1956, we were two years late. The long vacant house was razed in 1954. We found that this century-old house had a close association with the family of Orson Fowler, who started the octagon fad in 1849. It once belonged to his brother, Lorenzo, and his brother-in-law, Samuel Wells, and Wells' widow, Orson's sister, lived in it for years.

Now we come to the end of the Octagon Trail—in the Rochester area—but the trail winds up hill and down dale all over the Empire State and maybe some day we will have explored all of it.

Chapter 23

"Here Is Best"

It was Emerson who wrote:

"The ear loves names of foreign and classic topography. But here we are and if we tarry a little, we may come to learn that here is best."

The vacation season is in full bloom. Cars of the tourists swarm the highways. Americans are out to see America. Cars bearing Western New York license plates and bound for the lakes of Minnesota meet Minnesota cars headed for the Finger Lakes.

That sharing of the scenic beauty of the land is as it should be. But Western New Yorkers really don't have to seek fine scenery in far places. There is plenty close to home.

Maybe it won't be possible for you to visit the Grand Canyon of the West but surely you can manage "the Grand Canyon of the East," in the Genesee Valley, only 52 miles from Rochester's Four Corners. Still I will wager there are Rochesterians who have made the long trip to the big Grand Canyon yet have never set foot in Letchworth State Park, never known the spell of the ever-singing falls or thrilled to the majesty of the rock-walled gorge of the Genesee.

Some Rochester people did not even bother last Spring to

go around the corner to see Highland Park's lilacs, called the most magnificent display in the nation. Had they done so, they would have seen license plates from about every state in the union and hundreds from Canada.

They drive way up to Holland, Mich., for the justly famed Tulip Festival but pass up the Rose Festival at Newark and the season-long spectacle presented there in the world's largest commercial rose gardens.

In the heart of Upstate New York lie the Finger Lakes, each a sparkling, slender jewel in an emerald frame of hills. The scenery is so spectacular that the region has been called "The Switzerland of America."

Yet there are those who have lived all their lives in this area and ignored the natural wonderland of waterfalls, caves, glens and canyons that is Watkins Glen State Park. People rush to Ithaca for Cornell football games and won't take time out to see the silver plunging glory of Taughannock's waters, the highest falls in the East, on the way.

Some rhapsodize about the picturesque vineyard country of France yet have never seen the grapes ripening in the sunshine on the slopes of Keuka or Canandaigua Lakes or visited the cool, cavernous wine cellars that produce some of America's finest vintages.

Some prate of the rugged beauty of the Adirondacks, the Great Smokies and other distant mountain ranges yet have never climbed Gannett Hill where the wild panorama of the Bristols unfolds and below the summit yawns the awesome "jump-off." Others drive through the Southern Tier without heeding the glory of its mighty ridges.

Some talk of pretty mountain lakes in far away places and whizz blindly past that blue gem in the hills, Hemlock Lake. They tell of mystical things in distant lands and never have

heard the mysterious thunder of Seneca's hidden "Lake Guns," have never seen the "Painted Rocks" on her southern shores or marveled at the Bristol Valley's "Burning Spring."

There are those who rant about the quiet charm of New England villages and landscapes and never see the same charm much nearer home. They forget it was mostly Yankees who settled the older communities of Western New York and left their imprint upon them—village green, tall white steeple, green blinds, picket fence and mill pond.

They marvel at the great orchards of the Shenandoah and Hudson Valleys and forget the rich fruit belt that stretches along Lake Ontario, a blossom land in the Spring, a scene of bountiful harvest in the Summer and the Fall.

Where can they find a more distinctive countryside than the Middle Valley of the Genesee, the home of landed gentry, manor houses, tenant farmers, blooded stock and fox hunts?

Where is there a more distinctive highway than the Ridge Road, built by the waves of an ancient glacial lake, the road on which there are more cobblestone buildings than on any other in America? Or a more distinctive urban avenue than Geneva's South Main Street along the blue Seneca Lake?

We must yield to New England and the Eastern Seaboard in the matter of historic shrines, battlefields and the like. For this is, in comparison, a young region. But it was inhabited long before the white settlers came. This was part of the empire of the Iroquois. Our principal highways follow the old Indian trails. Our museums house their relics and the old Indian names are still upon the land—musical names like Canandaigua, Irondequoit, Geneseo, Ontario, Canaseraga, Tonawanda.

We have our battlefields too, nothing like Bunker Hill or

Lexington or Gettysburg, of course, but still a part of our national history and our heritage.

In quiet Victor there is a boulder beside the road which tells that the village was the scene of a bloody battle between the Senecas and an invading French army in the 17th Century.

On a hillock in the Town of Groveland above Conesus Lake is a monument to the soldiers of the Sullivan Expedition who were ambushed and massacred by Indians and British in the only engagement of the Revolution fought on Genesee Country soil.

And in Batavia still standing is the old Holland Land Company office, a remnant of the days of early settlement.

There's a marker on a little incline in the middle of the old village of Sodus Point where a handful of pioneers lost a battle to British invaders who came by lake boat and burned the town in the War of 1812, after raiding Charlotte and Pultneyville.

In the mystical land that is shadowed by drumlins, those strange-shaped hill formations which are relics of the Glacial Age, are the shrines of two world religions.

There is a tall shaft on a drumlin between Palmyra and Manchester where the Mormon Church was born of the dreams of a farm lad named Joseph Smith. The other shrine is at Hydesville on the fringe of Newark at the site of the cottage where the young Fox sisters first told of the mysterious rappings that gave birth to modern Spiritualism.

By all means, go out and see the rest of America—if you can. But don't overlook the sights only a few miles from home. And when visitors come here from other regions you might show them what we have to offer in Western New York. For we are citizens of no mean countryside.

Chapter 24

Chimney Bluffs

"One can turn his back on Lake Ontario, gaze at Chimney Bluffs and well imagine he is in the Bad Lands of the West, with unique formations and eroded valleys all about him."

I am indebted to a letter from Ted Skromak of Kilmer Street for that graphic description of one of Western New York's scenic wonders. It inspired a visit to the "Bad Lands." They are all that Skromak said they were.

Chimney Bluffs are those towering weirdly-shaped formations which for many a year Lake Ontario has been carving out of the shore east of Sodus Point. The recent sustained advance of the waves, which has caused so much woe and destruction all along the lakeside, has left new fantastic peaks and valleys at the Bluffs.

One Sunday afternoon the Merrills hit out for Chimney Bluffs. We had seen them before but it was years ago. We had to ask our way at Resort, the place where the lotus flowers on the waters of Sodus Bay. The man said, "Turn left off Route 104 at the top of the next hill on the Lake Bluff Road. Then take the next right and then the next left and there you are."

The trail led through orchards bowed by their rich burden of red apples, through a sun-drenched countryside resplendent in its Autumn coat of many colors.

The Bluffs seemed more spectacular than we remembered them. An impish boy playing in the sand could not have made more strange formations than old Ontario has cut in her shore.

If you plan to visit Chimney Bluffs, better take along some stout footgear. To really see the sights you have to walk at least a mile along the shore at the foot of the Bluffs. Your way leads through sand and stones and is no place for city shoes. The Boy Scouts of Palmyra who were there that day were properly shod and swarmed all over the "Bad Lands" on a treasure hunt.

I had a minor treasure hunt of my own. For I lugged home a fine flat brown stone which I picked up along the shore and which I thought might fit into our flagstone sidewalk pattern. It didn't. So now it serves as a firm foundation for the family garbage can in the back yard.

Thus trips to that necessary household adjunct bring up memories of Chimney Bluffs, of eerie peaks and eroded valleys and a golden afternoon in the Fall of 1952.

That stone from the "Bad Lands" will have good company. There are other treasures we have lugged home from "field trips." Our garden, a hodgepodge of old-fashioned flowers, is a sort of garden of memories.

Some of the flowers had their roots in odd places. Up in the North Country around Watertown the rocky fields are blue in Summer with a gentian-like flower. I presume the natives call it a weed. It seems to be peculiar to that region and is said to flourish there because of the iron in the soil.

We dug up some of those coarse-fibered flowers and

planted them in the ironless soil of Nunda Boulevard. That was in the Fall of 1950. Nothing happened the next year. But in 1952 one bunch of the blue flowers bloomed—and so the memory of a trip to the North Country lived in our back yard.

(They failed to bloom for the next three seasons. But marvel of marvels, they were back again in the Summer of 1956.)

There is a back road which parallels busy Route 5 between Mumford and Le Roy. It is not a particularly lovely drive because of the several crushed stone plants in the area which fill the air with dust and clatter. But along that roadside, rooted deeply in shale where you'd think nothing could grow, we found some wild honeysuckle in bloom. We dug up some of the plants, transplanted them and they have flourished in our garden ever since.

We have phlox which once grew wild along rural highways, an iris which came from the grounds of a deserted mansion which shall be nameless, columbine from the historic Scythe Tree Farm at Waterloo (we paid for them).

As a souvenir of a Southern Tier invasion of 1953, we brought home a tobacco plant from a field near Horseheads, once the center of an almost vanished tobacco growing industry. It grew in 21st Ward soil, but the frost nipped it before I could cure it and roll it in an after dinner cigar.

Our back yard is in a sense both a "trophy room" and a garden of memories.

Chapter 25

Echo Rock

Next time the Merrills go out looking for Echo Rock, they'll take diving suits along.

You've never heard of the Echo Rock? Well, then you are in the same boat with most dwellers around Hemlock Lake nowadays.

Once Echo Rock was a famous landmark on Hemlock's shores. It goes back to the Indian time before the white man came to hack down the primeval green forest that bordered the slim and radiant lake in the hills.

The ancient boulder, a child of the glacial age, was venerated by the Indians, after some brave chanced to shout there and heard his own voice come echoing back to him. Knowing nothing of the principle of sound waves, the superstitious tribesmen believed the answering voices at the Echo Rock were those of kindred in the Spirit Land.

The practical white settlers had no illusions about the supernatural aspects of the big stone but they kept the old legend alive and when Hemlock Lake became a popular Summer resort, Echo Rock was one of the spots pointed out to passengers on the passing steamboats. People visited the shore to hear the echo of their own voices, just as the Indians did.

Somebody painted the words, "Echo Rock," in bold letters on the stone and scores of persons inscribed their names upon it. At its bottom was this date: "Aug. 27, 1876." That was the year the city of Rochester first tapped the spring-fed lake for its water supply and thereby sounded Hemlock's eventual doom as a resort.

In the 1870s Echo Rock, signatures and all, was put on a stereogram, one of those three dimensional pictures so popular in those days. One of those views found its way into the vast stereoscopic collection of Dr. Guy L. Howe of 924 Clover Street, Brighton. So thanks to Dr. Howe, we were armed with a copy of the old picture when we set out for the hills to see what Echo Rock looked like after 77 years.

From previous rambles in the Hemlock country and after consulting Waite's 1883 history of Hemlock Lake, I determined that the rock was on the west side of the lake and not far from its foot.

So we took the dirt road at the north end of the lake, past the little park, and then turned on to the Mission Road along the west shore. The road gets its name from St. Michael's Mission, where the Brothers of the Divine Word tend their vineyards high above Hemlock's waters.

It was a fine afternoon and utterly peaceful around the hill-girt lake. It was hard to believe that Hemlock once was a bustling resort. We picked wild pink azaleas in the woods and saw in the distance the delicate white sheen of dogwood trees.

We stopped at the first farmhouse and asked for the Echo Rock. The lady of the house was pleasant but she had not lived in the neighborhood very long and had never heard of the Senecas' sacred stone.

At the second farmhouse, a middle-aged lady saved the day when she said: "I don't know much about such things but you go down to the village and see Frank Connor, the station agent. He is the historian in these parts."

So we went back to Hemlock village. Along the way a cock pheasant stalked unhurriedly across the road. He had never heard of the Echo Rock. Neither had two fat woodchucks who waddled down the highway and stared resentfully at the intruders in their domain.

At the weather-beaten Lehigh Valley Station in Hemlock, we found Frank Connor, lean, tanned, affable and steeped in the lore of his native countryside. I showed him the picture and he said:

"I have sat on that rock many times."

"Where is it?"

"Right now at the bottom of Hemlock Lake," he replied.

Now you see what I meant about taking diving suits along.

Connor explained that some 25 years ago the city of Rochester raised the level of Hemlock Lake by building dikes to increase the water supply. As a result the water gnawed away at the shore until finally Echo Rock slipped into the lake. Now some fathoms of Hemlock water cover its furrowed head.

Frank Connor has been in the service of the Lehigh for over 45 years, most of that time as station agent at Livonia and at Hemlock. His present—and second—tour of duty at Hemlock began in 1933.

He recalled Hemlock's heyday as a resort, the era of the steamboats and the excursion trains and the five hotels upon its shores.

"There were 200 cottages at Hemlock before there was

one at Conesus Lake," he said and there was pride in his voice.

Connor said that he can find no trace of the old site of the Echo Rock or its pungent neighbor, the sulphur spring. Probably time and the clear Hemlock water have washed the signatures off the ancient rock—the names of S. Heacock, E. Cornwall, S. Hastings, Henry Ritter, Huddleston, Alley and the rest. The name of W. W. Clark stands out in the old picture. Could the Wayland lawyer who rose to the Supreme Court bench have put his name on the Echo Rock in his youth?

Echo Rock now is only an echo of Hemlock's livelier past. It's a good thing we found Frank Connor or we'd still be looking for it on the lake's green western shore. At that I can think of no happier hunting ground.

Chapter 26

The Moon of Falling Leaves

Again it is the Moon of Falling Leaves in the ancient land of the Senecas.

In days of old the untutored Indian, ever sensitive to the panorama of the changing seasons, felt in his bones the spell of old October when the frosts painted his hunting grounds with rainbow hues.

To him it was a time to offer thanks to the Great Spirit for the bounties of the harvest. It was a time to gather the wild fruit and the nuts that fell from the trees like rain. It was a time to stalk the wild deer in the quiet woods, for the hunters to drive their canoes through far waters. And when the chase was over, it was a time to sit by the fire and smoke and meditate.

So down through the years a name has endured for those last lazy, hazy, mild days before the Winter and we call that golden time "Indian Summer."

Long ago the embers of the last Seneca council fire died in this old Indian land and now the smoke of the white man's cities mingles with the haze of old October.

But unchanged is the Autumnal glory of the countryside, in its coat of many colors—russet, gold, scarlet, purple and eternal green. The hardy sumach flares along the roads, the

woodbine reddens on old walls and the vineyards turn sere above the slim blue lakes.

There is a smell of burning leaves in the air, the bird flocks are winging Southward, boys and girls on their way to school scuff through the dry leaves as you and I used to, and memory brings back a sweet refrain, "Sweet Cider Time When You Were Mine."

A distinguished American caught the spirit of this magic time and wrote in a book called *The Education of Henry Adams:*

"The Indian Summer of life should be a little sunny and a little sad, like the season, and infinite in wealth and tone—but never hurried."

For those in the Indian Summer of their lives who are jaded with bustle and din, weary of wars and rumors of wars and bored by the hollow beat of the political tomtoms, it is a time to go out into the country and to know peace and beauty—for a little while.

At that you don't have to leave the confines of Rochester to view the Autumn pageant. It is in your own yard, along your own street, wherever there is a tree or a bush. You can go down to the gorge of the Genesee, to any of the parks or look up to the Pinnacle Hills and see the passing show in all its splendor. Or go down to Irondequoit Bay in old October and find that Inspiration Point is not just a name.

Go out into the rolling countryside Mendon-Pittsford way and bask in pastoral peace. There the corn shocks stand in the fields like soldiers on parade amid the pumpkins that whisper of the coming Halloween. The great barns are full to bursting, the farmers are planting their Winter wheat, and at night a hound dog bays at a wan moon.

Go out along the wave-built Ridge and Ontario's fruitful

shores and see the wonder of the harvest time. Smell the ripe red apples in the orchards and see the crates stacked high along the highways that teem with fruit-laden trucks.

Go to Sodus Point where the islands in the ancient Bay of the Cayugas are flaunting their Fall finery and listen to the murmur of the cottonwoods and the locust trees and to the chatter of the gulls lined up on the long lake pier.

Follow the Canal, known of old as the Clinton Ditch, east and west, to the harvest lands of Orleans and Wayne Counties, to the muck lands and the orchards. A man-made ditch can be beautiful in old October when even the scrub growth along its banks is a riot of color. Go to Newark, in the mystic land of those strange-shaped hills known as drumlins, and see roses, delphiniums and other flowers of Summer blooming in a vast garden in the time of falling leaves.

Go to the Valley of the Genesee beside the loitering, twisting river, where the stately oaks and elms wear rich and somber garb, where the landed gentry follow the hounds on Saturday fox hunts as their fathers did before them and where pure-bred horses and cattle crop the tall brown Northern Bluegrass.

Follow the old Indian river farther South to Letchworth State Park and see "the Grand Canyon" at the zenith of its beauty. The three waterfalls are singing their mighty anthem in a gorge ablaze with color, at the place the Indians called Portage, the carrying place for the war canoes.

Follow the trail of a phantom army in Revolutionary buff and blue—through a romantic land of finger-like lakes, glens, waterfalls, caverns and lordly hills glowing with all the hues of Autumn in the old land of lakes with Indian names, Canandaigua, Seneca, Keuka, Cayuga, Conesus, Canadice and Honeoye. Climb steep Gannett Hill and glory in the

epic panorama of the Bristols, "the little Alps," spread before your eyes in old October.

But the most flamboyant spectacles of all are in the land of the sugar maple, the Southern Tier. For of all our trees, the foliage of the maple is the most brilliant. It is red, the richest color in the spectrum, and in old October all the hills and vales are aflame in the Counties of Wyoming, Allegany, Cattaraugus and Steuben.

True, October's weather is not all "bright and blue." But generally it is the finest month of the Western New York calendar.

I wish I could put its beauty on canvas. I can only fumble away at typewriter keys. But I shall ever feel the magic of this many-sided land in the Moon of the Falling Leaves, in the hush before the storms of Winter, in the Indian Summer that is "a little sunny and a little sad—but never hustled."

Chapter 27

The Spell of the Valley

"I was never too young to know that the old Valley in which I was born is very beautiful."

That is the first sentence in a book that came out in 1934. The name of the book is *My House of Life*. It was written by the late Jessie Belle Rittenhouse and the "old Valley" is the Valley of the Genesee.

It is an autobiography. The author, a distinguished poetess and anthologist, was born in 1869 in "a rambling white house with a girdle of golden wheat fields" near the little village of Tuscarora.

She paints a vivid word picture of her girlhood in the Valley where "in May the orchards were a great white tent." She calls up memories of "twin elms beside the creek" and "beyond the white bridge, of a boat drawn leisurely from lock to lock of the Genesee Valley Canal."

There is a tale in the book that points up in appealing fashion the spell that old Valley holds for all who know it.

Jessie Rittenhouse's ancestors were pioneers and her people were well-to-do and influential in the community. As had been the custom from time immemorial in the Valley, the landowners looked after the wants of their tenants, especially the Irish who came to that region with the canal.

In that category was an elderly couple, Billy and Biddy, who lived in a cabin at the canal lock on Rittenhouse land. To them Jessie's parents were "the Masther and the Mishtress." Billy had made a living working on the canal but after that waterway ceased to operate in the 1870s, the old couple found themselves mostly dependent on Rittenhouse bounty.

Then a letter came from the old couple's son, Johnny, in Ireland, enclosing money for their passage to the old country. The whole neighborhood pitched in to outfit Billy and Biddy properly for the long journey. Their "sthrong box" was full of warm clothing and they were laden down with hampers of chicken and other rural delicacies when they departed. Jessie's father drove them to the Erie depot in Mount Morris in his best carriage.

After a few weeks a letter came from Johnny in Ireland saying the old folks had arrived safely. One night the cabin where they had lived went up in flames, probably the work of prankish boys. Thereupon Tuscarora proceeded virtually to forget the existence of the old couple.

Two years went by and one night when the Rittenhouses were at supper, they heard "the sound of dragging feet on the porch and a faltering knock at the door."

Biddy all but fell into the room. In her wake was Billy, feebly trying to support her. They were ragged, shoeless, dirty, dog tired. How different their pitiable return to the Valley from the splendor of their departure.

They sobbed out their story to "the Masther and the Mishtress." They could not get used to the new ways in the old country. They were not happy in Johnny's home. They longed for the serenity of their cabin beside the canal in the green valley across the sea.

Finally they prevailed upon their son to give them passage money for the return to America. He failed to give them the added fare from New York to the Genesee Valley.

So Billy and Biddy started out on foot. For a time they dragged the "sthrong box" after them with a rope. Then they discarded it and Billy carried a little bundle of clothing on a stick over his shoulder. They got an infrequent lift in a wagon. Most of the time they walked, mile after mile. They begged their food. They slept wherever night overtook them, in barns, in hay stacks, in fields under the stars. Always the memory of their snug home in the Valley drove them on.

They were disconsolate to learn the cabin had burned. But the Rittenhouses gave them a new home and furnished it. The old couple lived out their days there happily. Biddy went first. Billy lingered on until he was very old.

In 1934 Jessie Belle Rittenhouse wrote that she could still in fancy hear floating across the Valley the elfin music of Billy's fiddle, playing old Irish tunes from his porch.

She never forgot that "the old Valley in which I was born is very beautiful." That old Valley had a lure even for two of its humblest adopted children that called them back from their own homeland across the broad ocean and many a weary mile of land.

Chapter 28

Thruway vs. Main Street

Call me an old fuddy duddy if you will but there is one thing about a thruway that I don't like. Thruways avoid inhabited communities.

Those who travel them may whizz right across ten counties without having ever to slow down for any obstacle such as Farmer Hay's light truck backing out from the curb in front of the village feed store.

Thruways (in some states they are freeways, in others turnpikes) are wide and they are straight, which is more than can be said about a lot of the older highways. They certainly make for greater speed. But is speed the Alpha and Omega of existence?

What profit a man if he gain a few minutes and lose all touch with the real heart line of America, the Main Streets of her villages?

Oh, the villages can get along all right without Mr. Johnny Go Faster. The chances are that without him the villagers and their children will live longer. But Johnny Go Faster, to whom the beauty of the countryside has become merely a blurred streak, is also missing something of the fine flavor of this land when the village Main Streets are off his road map.

To me there's nothing more interesting than a village . . . the rows of two or three-story business blocks, mostly of brick, with the autos parked diagonally before them . . . the garish modern movie house and the old block with the words, "Opera House," still visible on it, although it has been 50 years since a thespian trod its boards . . . the shady old public square with the Civil War monument and the stand where the band plays on Saturday nights . . . the graceful white churches with their slim spires and their squarish towers that whisper of New England.

The old inns, some of which were stage coach stops in the olden days . . . the stately old colonial type homes whose dignified lines tell of the good taste of the pioneers . . . the modern ranch houses and the Victorian models with turrets and gingerbread trimmings . . . the fire house with the shiny apparatus which is the village's pride and about which so much of the community's social life revolves . . . the huge sprawling central school, likely built with New Deal PWA money in a rock-ribbed Republican town . . . the majesty of great elms set out long ago.

The blue historical markers that tell of the sites of Indian villages, the birthplaces of celebrities, the onetime stations of the Underground Railroad that spirited Negro fugitives to freedom . . . the mansions that are now libraries, funeral homes or club houses for the American Legion, the Elks, the Moose or the Knights of Columbus . . . a few watering troughs, hardly any harness or blacksmith shops and no livery stables, although there is a gasoline station at almost every other corner . . . the smell of burning leaves in the Autumn, for in a village it's legal to burn leaves in your own yard.

Maybe you think all villages are alike. To me, and I

reckon I've visited all of them in Western New York, each has its own personality, just as people do.

There are dynamic villages that are really little cities, like Newark, Wellsville, Penn Yan and East Rochester. Few are overwhelmingly industrial. I can think of only one "company town" where the houses are all pretty much alike and that is the salt mining village of Retsof.

There are serene old history-saturated towns like Angelica and Hammondsport. There are crossroads hamlets where more people sleep in the cemetery on the hillside than live in the community. There are "ghost towns" that once were lively, self-sufficient places where now the buildings are rotting away, some of them pretentious ones that tell of a bygone glory.

There are such distinctive village Main Streets as Pultneyville's where Lake Ontario's waters almost lap its northern edge and Montour Falls' principal street with a 156-foot waterfall splashing at its head. There are landmarks on the Main Streets like the 150-foot Republican flag pole in Palmyra, a village which once made Ripley's "Believe It or Not" column because of an intersection with a church on each of its four corners.

But the most interesting thing about the villages is their people. All sorts of people rub elbows on Main Street and most everybody knows everybody else, on a first name basis. A person is clothed in the dignity of his individuality. He is not merely another sardine in an already crowded can. They are all there on Main Street—dirt farmers in overalls, gentleman farmers in sports coats, professional men, brisk business men, grizzled, slow-moving retired farmers, little old ladies with lace at their throats, marcelled, bosomy matrons fresh from the beauty parlor, migrant workers of all

shades, the village gossip, the village drunkard, the village eccentric.

In a world of thruways I would never have run across the auction on the edge of Wyoming village on a sunny Saturday afternoon with cars lined up for half a mile on either side of the road and people departing with chairs, picture frames and, as the auction bills say, "other articles too numerous to mention."

Nor the Ladies Aid or some similar organization holding a rummage sale in the public park at Prattsburg in the Autumn-tinted Steuben hills.

Nor buzzing little knots of people on the streets of Hemlock, people both angry and fearful after the wanton murder of a neighbor's little girl.

Nor sprightly Bernarr Macfadden, the physical culturist and world's oldest parachute jumper, talking animatedly with his youngish, slack-clad wife as they crossed a busy street in hill-shrouded Dansville. (Since then Macfadden has joined his fathers and before his death was estranged from his "Jonnie.")

Nor such a refreshing oldtimer as "Tuck" Prentiss at Pultney, the village that drowses above an arm of Keuka, the two-pronged Finger Lake, nor having him point out the giant hollyhock beside his stoop (porch to you) and say, "This year it's been too dry. It only grew 12 feet high. Last year it was 15 foot tall and I had a picture taken to send in to the *'Chronicle'* when I saw that very day a piece in the paper about a 16-footer in Seneca Falls."

You may wonder why I am so keen about the villages. Well, I came from one, a tiny one. Possibly retrospect dims and gilds our memories. The village of my nativity seems at that distance to have been an idyllic sort of place. You for-

get the cramped horizons, the malicious gossip, the petty feuds of a small town in the remembrance of a serene and unhurried way of life and of how everybody pitched in to help a neighbor in trouble.

There was a time when village life did not seem idyllic to me. The mother of a boyhood friend, who died before his time, recently sent me a letter I had written when I was a young clerk in my father's general store and my friend was attending a Midwestern university.

I wrote then that "I do not intend to spend my life in a one-horse country town. I'm going to the city."

Well, I went to the city. I have lived in several cities, Buffalo, Washington, Flint, Mich., and New York—and the last 33 years in Rochester. That's not counting a compulsory five months spent in the city of Brest, France, in 1918–19, after a tour of duty nearer the Western Front.

Strange how the years change one's viewpoint. Now my favorite form of relaxation is to go out into the villages—even the "one-horse"ones.

Chapter 29

The Toll Gate Returns

Thruways are something new in these parts but toll gates and toll roads are not.

Once upon a time—and it was the horse and buggy time—there were a lot of them around Rochester and its area. The oldtime toll stations, frame plain buildings with white road barriers, had little of the stateliness of the white "arches of triumph" that punctuate the stretch of superhighway that Governor Dewey opened in 1954.

The old turnpikes and plank roads of Grandpa's time were far shorter than the 396-mile Thruway which extends from Buffalo to Spring Valley in Rockland County. But they weren't built by the state. They were built by private enterprise and paid for out of tolls. And the tolls were considerably less than those on the Thruway.

An old schedule of the Rochester & Irondequoit Turnpike Company, which lasted from 1893 to 1910, and had a well-remembered toll gate at St. Paul Boulevard and Scholfield Road in Irondequoit, reveals these rates: One cent a mile for each vehicle drawn by one animal and one cent a mile for each additional animal. For every vehicle used for carrying passengers the rate was three cents a mile and "for every score of sheep or swine one and one half cents a mile and for every score of meat cattle two cents a mile."

Exempt from tolls were persons going to and from public worship, funerals, school or town meetings, military or court duties or "required work on the highways." No toll was required for "troops in the actual military service of the United States" nor for "persons living one half mile from the gate when not transporting passengers for profit."

Probably the best patronized Rochester toll gate was the one on Lake Avenue just South of Holy Sepulcher Cemetery. The road to the lake was heavily traveled after Ontario Beach Park blossomed into a little Coney Island in the late 1880s.

Swarms of bicyclists "scorched" its cinder paths and fast-stepping nags raced in friendly rivalry over its dusty course but all had to halt at the toll gate with the wooden barrier beside the two-story frame house where the toll taker lived.

After 1905 the road to the lake was free as air again after 25 years. Henry Culp was the last toll collector and when he and his gate went into retirement, he was quoted as being "glad to get away from the biting sarcasm and endless abuse" of his "customers." In no era of history have Americans liked to pay taxes of any kind.

First keeper of the St. Paul Boulevard toll gate was William Peck. He was ably assisted by his wife. For four years they lived in the two-story square building beside the toll road. Sometimes they lowered a wooden barrier across the highway in the manner of barriers at railroad crossings. But not often. The Pecks would sit at a window of the house and when they saw a traveler approaching, one of them would amble out to the road and collect the toll.

There were those who tried to dodge the fee. Some would take a little used road through what is now Seneca Park.

To prevent toll dodgers slipping in by way of Cooper Road, a toll shanty was erected at that crossing.

Sometimes the Pecks and their successor as keeper of the gate, six foot, raw-boned George Leake, had to chase boy bicyclists who eluded them at the barrier. In general few escaped.

Death took a grim toll at one toll gate in the Genesee Country years ago. It seems one John Hill built a plank road along Hemlock Lake at a cost of $500. He hoped to pay for it out of tolls. But he became involved in an argument with the first man to use the new road. Hill managed to collect a 25-cent fee but it was the only toll he ever collected on his new plank road.

In the excitement John Hill fell dead.

In the early years of this century a new order came to America; not at once, but gradually. More and more horseless carriages, strange contraptions piloted by adventurous souls in dusters and goggles began to chug over the roads. Often horses had to haul the "devil wagons" home.

But in the end the autos all but shoved Dobbin off the highways. In the new swift age of gasoline, toll gates and dirt roads had no place. People were demanding—and getting—better and free roads.

Now the toll gates, doomed half a century ago by the horseless carriage, are back with us again. Ironically it is the same horseless carriage that has brought them back.

Chapter 30

Court Week

The middle-aged man with the satchel waiting for the milk train at the little weather-beaten depot in the early morning was obviously a farmer.

The wind and the sun had painted his neck a leathery brick red. His blue serge suit had been carefully pressed, probably by the light of a kitchen lamp the night before, by the gray-haired helpmate he always called "Ma," but it did not hang easily on his lean, stooped frame. Overalls and jacket were his natural garb. His celluloid collar sawed at his Adam's Apple every time he turned his head. His new shoes pinched feet that were accustomed to roomy rubber boots.

But he was smoking a cigar with gusto, if not with practiced grace, and his eyes were alight with expectancy as he hauled from a vest pocket a massive watch hitched to a wide gold chain that spanned his midriff. From another vest pocket peeked the bristles of a tooth brush. Our traveler glanced at the timepiece and noted that:

"The 7:24 is goin' to be late agin. Hain't whistled for Fish Lake crossing yet."

"Where ya goin', Seth?" asked the fat old man whose drooping gray mustache was tinted a golden brown from to-

bacco juice and who had met every train for years with his one-horse bus.

"Down to the county seat. I'm on the Grand Jury," replied Seth, trying not to sound too important. To him *Grand* Jury sounded so much more impressive than trial jury.

This, of course, was in pre-horseless carriage days when going to the county seat was an important event in the life of the average rural dweller. In the county seats or "shire towns" no small part of the drama of America has been played.

Farmer Seth's destination would likely be a sizeable town, not necessarily the most populous in the county but certainly one whose leaders long ago had possessed a superior political skill and had won the county capital away from eager rivals. Some fancy back-stage maneuvers have been engineered, as well as a few pitched battles fought, over the location of American county seats. And a few hands have been crossed with silver.

Seth would find the county seat an exciting place, especially if the courts and Board of Supervisors happened to be in session at the same time. All the hotels, the Globe, the Mansion House, the Red Jacket, the Hotel Regner (the names are fictitious), would be full. In those days people who had business at the county seat stayed there until their business was done. They could not drive back and forth daily because there were no automobiles.

"Court week" brought life and color to the county seats. The bars thrived and so did "Mayme's place" down by the tracks—if it chanced to be that kind of county seat. At night there would be a big poker game in the "Crow's Nest," up under the roof of the leading hotel.

By day up the long steps of the pillared court house with

the gleaming dome above the shady square there marched, along with Seth, the important men of the county—the judges, the lawyers, the politicos with the glad hand and the harlot's smile.

Now the trend is to house all county departments in one modern building of severe lines sans pillars and dome. Still many an old-fashioned court house remains on the public square beside the brick jail, which also is the sheriff's residential quarters, and the county clerk's office, that hall of records where deeds and other documents are recorded.

The county seat to which Seth was bound was not a large city like Rochester or Buffalo where the mills of the courts grind constantly but some smaller capital where "Court Week" meant something. Such county seats were often also the scene of the County Fair in the Autumn. Too many of those oldtime fairs are no more. Never were court terms or legislative sessions allowed to conflict with Fair Week. There must be no rival show to distract the people from that great American spectacle, the County Fair.

* * *

Steuben is one of the few counties in the nation to have three court houses, although it has one county seat, Bath. Court terms are held not only in the 90-year-old buff colored, pillared structure which faces historic Pulteney Square in Bath but also in Hornell and in Corning, the two cities in Steuben.

Seneca is one of the 24 double shire counties in the country. It has two county seats, Waterloo and Ovid, 15 miles apart. Waterloo is in the northern part of the county and Ovid in the southern and the two halves seldom see eye to eye. Waterloo houses the county offices but court terms are

still held at little Ovid, where the three red brick buildings, only one of them now in county service, stand in a row and of graduated size like the "Three Bears" of the nursery tale.

In a wall of the Monroe County court house in downtown Rochester built in 1896 are the stones of "Indian" Allen's mill, first on the Genesee. Few visitors to the building even glance at them. Nor do passers-by notice the statue of Justice in its niche over the West Main Street entrance. That figure, carved out of pine wood, was first put on the lofty cupola of the second court house, erected in 1851. Now a streamlined Courts Building is planned for the new Civic Center and the fate of the Monroe County court house is in doubt.

Ontario is the mother of Western New York counties and its shire town, Canandaigua, was the capital of the frontier. Pioneers built the first court house in the backwoods in the year of 1794. There Jemima Wilkinson, "The Universal Friend," founder of a strange religious cult, was acquitted of a charge of blasphemy in the 18th Century. That rude temple of justice echoed to the oratory of the Indian Demosthenes, Red Jacket.

Ontario's second court house, built in 1824, now serves as Canandaigua's City Hall. From a nearby jail, long since torn down, William Morgan was abducted in 1826 after he threatened to print the secrets of Free Masonry. Morgan disappeared from the face of the earth and as a result the national Anti Masonic Party came into being.

The present stately court house, whose gleaming dome may be seen from afar high above the trees of the lakeside town, is 98 years old. There Susan B. Anthony, the high priestess of woman's rights, was convicted of the crime of casting her vote. On the court house grounds is a boulder

marking the signing of the Pickering Treaty with the Indians in 1794. Atop the court house until recent years was a statue of Justice, a replica of the one in Rochester. But "The Lady with the Scales" was weakened by time and the elements and had to be taken down.

When Livingston County was formed in 1821, Geneseo, Avon, Lakeville and Williamsburg, a "ghost town" now, were contenders for the county seat. Geneseo won, largely because it was the home of the powerful Wadsworth family. Generations of landed gentry, villagers and farmers from the hills have entered the pillar-guarded portals of the old brick court house in the capital of the "Northern Bluegrass" country.

Orleans County was conceived in strife. First there was the quarrel about its name. One faction wanted Adams, the other Jackson. Orleans was a compromise choice although the county may have been named in honor of General Jackson's victory at New Orleans in the War of 1812 rather than for a French city or duke.

Then there was the feud over the county seat between Gaines, then a brisk stage coach center on the Ridge Road, and the new canal town of Albion. Albion men were full of guile. They dammed a shallow, almost dry, creek and set a mill wheel to turning there, just for a day, to influence the commissioners who came to choose the county seat. The visitors, plied with applejack, were impressed by the busy scene and "perfidious Albion" won. The present white-columned, brick court house with the glistening dome in Albion's public square arose in 1856.

Lyons always has been the shire town of the county named after "Mad Anthony" Wayne and the present limestone court house with its Ionic portico and imposing dome goes

back to 1855. That court house saw the sensational trial and conviction of Western New York's No. 1 desperado, Oliver Curtis Perry, who held up a railway express messenger, and escaped—briefly—in a stolen locomotive back in 1892.

From the early days of the 19th Century when the Holland Land Company set up its headquarters at "the great bend of the Tonawanda," at the place where the Indian trails converged, Batavia has been the seat of Genesee County. The Greek revival, gray sandstone structure in the heart of the city was built in 1841. A modern county government building now adjoins the historic court house with the high stone steps.

No county seat has a more unusual name than Penn Yan, the capital of Yates County in the land of vineyards. Its early settlers were divided between Pennsylvanians and New Englanders and to settle a dispute over the name of the settlement, PENN for Pennsylvania, and YAN for Yankee, emerged as a compromise. Its court house is of the traditional white pillared, red brick type set well back from the street and with a tower instead of a dome.

Hill-girt Warsaw had to fight to win and keep its place as the seat of government of Wyoming County. When the county was organized 115 years ago, Orangeville and Wethersfield Springs, now mere hamlets, were Warsaw's spirited rivals for the honor. And three quarters of a century ago Warsaw had to fight down a determined move to shift the county capital to East Gainesville, now Silver Springs. In 1946 the old court house was joined with another county building and remodeled into the present modern structure near the tall Civil War monument that came from the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876 and is a Warsaw landmark.

For 32 years Allegany County had two shire towns, Angelica and Belmont. The original court house built in 1819 at Angelica, a lovely village with a lovely name, still stands in cream-colored dignity on the village square. It is called the cradle of Republicanism in New York State because a pioneer meeting of the new party was held there. After 1860 Angelica had to share its county seat glory with younger Belmont. The latter village has held sole title since 1892. The present modern Allegany County building on a hill overlooking the Genesee was constructed in 1938.

Watkins Glen is the seat of Schuyler, one of the youngest and smallest of upstate counties but with more waterfalls, glens and gorges to the square inch than any other. When Schuyler was created in 1854, Havana, now Montour Falls, and in Indian times, French Catherine's Town, was picked as the county seat over the determined rivalry of Watkins. For 14 years there ensued a county seat war. The board of supervisors refused to take possession of the new county buildings at Havana and held court in rented quarters in Watkins. The rivals carried their feud into the courts. In 1868 Watkins won and the seat of government was moved three miles to the northward. The old county buildings still stand at Montour Falls.

The counties of the area were established in this chronological order: Ontario, 1789; Steuben, 1796; Genesee, 1802; Seneca, 1804; Allegany, 1806; Monroe and Livingston, on the same day in 1821; Yates in February, 1823; Wayne in April, 1823; Orleans in 1824; Wyoming in 1841 and Schuyler in 1854.

But mere figures tell nothing of the stirring, continuous human drama enacted in our county seats and our court houses since Ontario, mother of counties, was born in 1789.

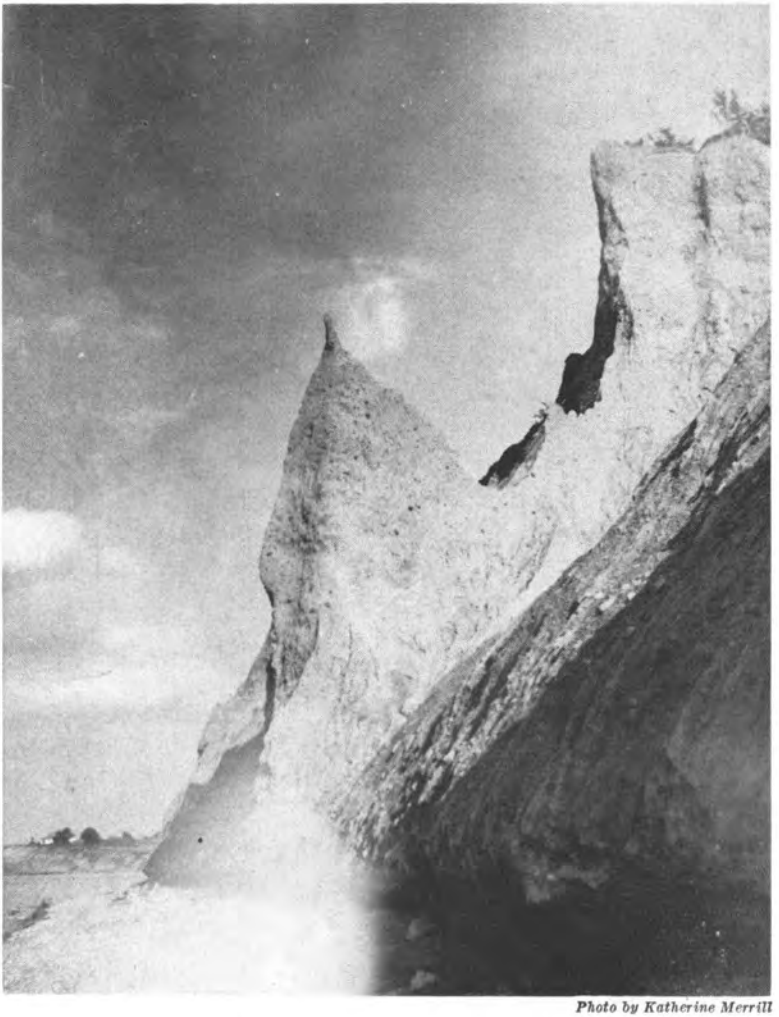


Photo by Katherine Merrill

Chimney Bluffs on Lake Ontario

Photo by Katherine Merrill

Water Still Flows in the "General's Ditch" North of Clyde

Across the years there flash pictures of man hunts and captured criminals being led back in irons to the old brick jails; of the court room dramas, the oratorical thunder of the rival lawyers and the tension of the long wait for the jury verdicts; of the political deals, the campaign strategy, the division of the spoils of victory in the plushy hotel rooms of the county seats; the gaiety of Fair Week and the glory of Court Week in the old days when folks came to the county seat on the milk train as did Farmer Seth or rode grandly to town in horse and carriage.

I wonder why someone hasn't written a book titled "County Seat" or a song about "The Old Court House on the Square."

Chapter 31

Fair Week

"Hurr-ee! Hurr-ee! Hurr-ee! Get your tickets now for the Little Egypt dancing girls . . . See Bosco, the Ant Eater. He eats 'em alive. He's eating 'em now. Right this way. . . .

"The cane you ring is the cane you carry away . . . Hots, they're always hot, the finest hots on the grounds . . . Get back to your posts (ding dong, ding goes the starter's bell). Back to your post there No. 4. . . .

"Mrs. Pratt's crabapple jelly took a first but then her sister-in-law was one of the judges . . . How are ya, Newt? How's the crops over Webster Crossing way? Ain't seen you since the fair last year. What's that you say about short horn steers? I'm a little deef. Oh, you said you ain't missed a fair in 40 years. . . ."

So rise the voices from the midways of a thousand county fairs. They swell the mighty chorus that is the true voice of America. For the county fair is truly an American institution. Long ago, here in this new land, we transformed the Old World fairs, which were merely marts for the sale of merchandise into exhibitions to display the products of our farms, factories and homes and for the entertainment of our people.

There are those who darkly hint that the county fair is doomed, that one day it will go the way of the railroad, steamboat and interurban excursions, the "century" bicycle runs and the other pastimes of our fathers that yielded to the swift onrush of the automobile. They say there will come harvest times when the voice of the barker no longer will be heard in the land and the click of the fairgrounds turnstile will be muted.

I don't go along with those prophets of doom. It is not yet the time to chant a requiem over the county fairs. True they aren't what they used to be. Nor are there so many of them. Many a fine old fair has given up the ghost in the last three decades. But in some instances, as in Monroe County, new and vigorous fairs have taken their places.

And many of the old time fairs are still going strong. The Steuben County Fair at Bath is 137 years old; the Yates County Fair at Penn Yan has been holding forth beside Keuka Lake for 117 years; the Allegany County Fair has been drawing crowds to Angelica for 112 Autumns and "the Great" Palmyra Fair is in its 107th year.

Some of the old fairs have been transplanted. The Genesee County Fair which is 117 years old has moved from its old site in Batavia, pre-empted by Batavia Downs, arena of the trotters and pacers, to nearby Alexander. The 113-year-old Ontario County Fair, after a brief lapse, is being held outside of Canandaigua instead of in the lakeside city.

Most genuinely rural of all the fairs is the Hemlock or Slab City "World's Fair." For 85 years it has been a red letter event in the land of the Upland Lakes and has a strong hold upon its people. Once the farm folks came down from the hills to Hemlock in buggies, surreys, democrat wagons, some on horseback, a few on foot. They wore rusty black

and beards. Now their descendants arrive in automobiles of many hues and they wear sports shirts, slacks and crew cuts.

Gone are the fairs that once held forth at Avon, Perry, Warsaw, Albion, Naples, Cuba, Olean, Hornell and, in Monroe County, the fair at Brockport which disappeared through merger in 1931 and the Rochester Exposition which died of financial malnutrition in 1938.

Rochester's Expo Horse Show—how it all comes back, the glitter of that first week in September in the 1920s. . . . "The Touch and Out" event, state troopers and cavalrymen riding through fire, Loula Long Combs, Vanderbilts, Wanamakers, high-toned Canadians, hearty Jim Sam Wadsworth in the Horse Show Oval, Creatore's Band and the Tea Tent of the socially elect, the whole colorful spectacle that delighted so many of us ordinary folks.

Elkanah Watson, a merchant of Albany, has been called "father of the fair." It was he who in 1819 influenced the New York State Legislature to appropriate $10,000 for six years for premiums to be paid for agricultural and home products, to be shown at annual fairs.

But long before 1819 the first fair was held in the Genesee Country. In July of 1793 there appeared in the *Albany Gazette* this notice:

"Williamsburg Fair and Genesee Races—This is to give notice that there will be held at Williamsburg at the Grand Forks of the Genesee River, an annual fair for the sale and purchase of cattle, horses and sheep, to commence on Monday, the 23d of September. . . . On the 25th there will be run for over the race ground at Williamsburg a purse of 50 pounds. On the 26th there will be a run for the sweepstakes and races for small prizes. . . ."

That "ad" came from the pen of Charles Williamson, the

ace promoter of his time and the agent for British interests with thousands of Genesee Country acres to sell, an important figure in frontier history.

The fair was a bold venture, for Williamson's "city" of Williamsburg was only 15 months old and merely a huddle of buildings in the backwoods, a long way from the established settlements of the East and South. But his fair was a success and in 1796 Williamson staged another one at Bath, which he advertised far and wide as "this far-famed city in the land of the crystal lakes and memorial parks, located in the garden home of the recently vanquished Six Nations."

Today cattle crop the grass on the site of the ghost city of Williamsburg, south of Geneseo where the Genesee and Canaseraga waters join. There's only the old cemetery on the hill to tell of the land agent's dream of a metropolis there. But Bath grew into a handsome, stately county seat town and Charles Williamson's blood would dance to know they are still holding fairs every Autumn in his "far-famed city in the land of the crystal lakes."

Rochester's first recorded fair was that of the Monroe Agricultural Society held on Oct. 24, 1822 at "Christopher's meadow by the Main Street bridge." It featured a parade, oratory in the Presbyterian meeting house and a dinner at 30 cents a plate after which the prize cattle, sheep and swine and the products of the field and loom were exhibited at the meadow along the river.

Seven times the State Fair was held in Rochester. In 1851, a banner year, 100,000 people flocked to the mill town for the fair, which, according to a newspaper account, was held in "a field of 25 acres on the banks of the Genesee River opposite Mount Hope Cemetery."

The account dealt at length with the displays of produce,

domestic fabrics, farm machinery and rhapsodized over one tent where "numerous young ladies with cheeks rivalling the bloom of the peaches they exhibited attended upon the tables."

Rochester's hotels were crowded and the streets were full of vehicles conveying passengers to and from the fairgrounds. Canal boats also were put into use.

The article continued: "The road leading to the grounds was lined with booths for the sale of liquors and refreshments, besides many tents devoted to the exhibitions of learned pigs, giants, dwarfs and monstrosities . . . indeed every attraction to draw attention and lighten the pockets of the country people and the boatmen on the canal for whom the occasion was a general holiday."

Styles have changed in county fairs as they have in about everything else. Gone from the fairgrounds are the hitching rails and posts to which were tied the patient horses, protected by netting from the flies. Gone is the sea of buggies, gigs and wagons. Gone from the midway are the shell game and the wrestler who took on all comers. And happily the oratory of the politicians has been stilled.

But not the voice of the barker nor the roar that comes from the stands and along the rail when the trotters flash into the home stretch. Nor the music of the carousel nor the dizzy whirl of the Ferris wheel. And the carefree, carnival spirit of the crowds is the same as when Pop wore a derby and a walrus mustache and Mom's skirts picked up the dust of the fairgrounds and the bands played "Wait 'Til the Sun Shines Nellie," and "Meet Me at St. Louie, Louie, Meet Me at the Fair."

May the bright banners of the county fair never be furled in the time of Upstate harvest!

Chapter 32

The General's Ditch

A century ago "the Adams Ditch" was written off as a failure, another grand but empty dream.

The official name of the waterway which was to link Lake Ontario at Sodus Bay with the Erie Canal at Clyde was the Sodus Canal. But to Wayne County folks it has always been "the Adams Ditch" or "the General's Ditch."

For it was Gen. William H. Adams, Lyons judge and a veteran of the War of 1812, who revived the project in 1841 after 12 fallow years, who pushed the actual digging—in patches—of his dream ditch and who sank his own fortune in it.

Finally the money gave out and the digging stopped, never to be resumed. But to his dying day in 1865, General Adams never gave up his dream of barges floating through the Wayne County flatlands.

I hope that in that special Valhalla which is reserved for stout-hearted warriors, the old general knows that his bargeless, uncompleted canal is still useful after all these years.

There is still water in it north of Clyde and around the village of Rose. It drains many farm acres. It quenches the thirst of many farm herds. It has been a swimming hole for generations. Trappers run their lines along it. And the other day I saw a big carp leap up from its weedy depths.

The Sodus Canal may be only a line now on rare old maps, only a few paragraphs in county histories, but it still exists, and it wasn't entirely a failure after all.

The idea was born in 1827, two years after the completion of the Erie Canal, when local interests got the state to make a preliminary survey of the projected canal. But nothing came of it, mostly because more powerful financial interests favored the parallel Oswego Canal.

In 1829 the Sodus Canal Company was incorporated with a capitalization of $200,000 "to construct a canal from the Canandaigua Outlet or Seneca River to a point on Sodus Bay convenient to lake vessels."

A state appropriation was sought but legislators from Rochester and Oswego, representing what former President Truman doubtless would call "selfish interests," blocked the way. Later plans for state help met the same fate.

Every five years a new charter was obtained but the project wilted on the vine until 1841 when a new group, headed by the indefatigable General Adams, took over. A stock-selling campaign was begun. Many acres, including the "Shaker Tract," now Alvah G. Strong's Alasa Farms on Sodus Bay, were purchased. Much swamp land in the Towns of Galen and Huron was drained and reclaimed for tillage. Actual digging began around the bay and for a time all went well with the grand canal.

An old map on the wall of the office of Mrs. Margaret Merhoff, Wayne County historian, in the court house at Lyons shows the route of the "proposed Sodus ship canal." It tapped the bay west of Resort in the neighborhood of Thornton's Point, swung north to Glenmark with its mills and waterfalls, thence to Rose (Rose Valley in those days) and southward across the flats to Clyde and the Erie Canal.

Mrs. Merhoff also has a paper-covered pamphlet, a sort of prospectus, issued by the promoters in 1851. Then almost half of the 12-mile ditch still was uncompleted and the enterprise was heavily mortgaged. But none of these things dimmed the vision or daunted the spirit of William H. Adams.

It was no picayune local project he fostered. He planned a channel for ocean-going ships, on an international scale. The prospectus stated that "the Sodus Canal will be the sole channel for supplying Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence River and Upper Canada and all cities and towns contiguous thereto with anthracite and bituminous coal from the Pennsylvania fields."

It would be a link with the Cayuga Canal and would "convert Ithaca into a great interior maritime port." Ithaca was agog over the project. An old painting of the Finger Lakes port made at the height of the canal boom shows Cayuga's waters dotted with imaginary vessels, some of them seagoing craft.

The General pointed out that coal could be shipped at low cost from the Scranton field by rail to Ithaca and thence by water the remaining 70 miles to Sodus Bay. He also saw a "continuous water course from the coal fields . . . through Seneca Lake to Sodus Bay," utilizing such now forgotten waterways as the Susquehanna, Junction and Chemung Canals.

The prospectus tells of the engineering advantages of the project, of the generally flat terrain requiring only 140 feet of lockage, of the use of three miles of natural ravines and of "moving the sand by the use of water," through the construction of dams. Apparently the idea was that the dams,

when broken, would release the imprisoned water which would wash out a channel at the bay end of the ditch.

It must be remembered that it was a time of hand labor. There were no steam shovels, no bulldozers, no concrete mixers, no motor trucks, no electric cranes.

The General was confident in 1851 that "the canal would be in use in about a year." Actually the project was then on its last legs. Soon the digging ceased. The canal era had passed and the railroads were the thing.

In 1861 the canal charter expired and the next year the federal government was offered perpetual free use of the waterway if it would finance its completion. Uncle Sam gave the back of his hand to that proposal. The Sodus Bay Canal died of financial malnutrition.

Some 70 years later when Franklin D. Roosevelt was governor of New York, the old project was revived. A survey was ordered but nothing came of it. Maybe the St. Lawrence Seaway will again put the spark of life in the abandoned "Adams Ditch."

* * *

One golden October afternoon in 1954 we followed the course of that old ditch for three-quarters of a mile—across the acres of one of Wayne County's largest landowners, Dr. James W. Hannett. (Dr. Hannett died in September of 1956.)

Dr. Hannett, a retired physician, returned to his native heath four years ago after many years in New Mexico. He lived about two miles north of Clyde on the road to Rose, the village named after a pioneer not after a flower, a road lined with apple orchards bowed down with their fruitful burden.

For some years prior to the return to the scenes of his boyhood, Dr. Hannett had been buying up farms in the region. He owned 17 farms and 2,000 acres of land between Clyde and Rose. He raised Western beef cattle and his herds were mainly Herefords and Black Angus.

Dr. Hannett put to good use "the Adams Ditch" that runs across several of his farms. He dug several drainage ditches which empty into the old canal. The largest one he called "the Hannett Canal."

His pure-bred cattle drank from the general's old ditch. In some places the expanse is at least 15 feet wide. In others it is narrow and spring fed. The Sodus Canal has by no means vanished from the face of the earth.

North and South of Rose, you run across traces of the canal. But up North around Glenmark, an isolated crossroads that long ago, according to local tradition, was an outlaw hideaway, there is no trace of the Sodus Canal which was to carry the Pennsylvania coal to the lake port.

Maybe Glenmark is where the old general ran out of money when he was digging his ditch a century ago.

Chapter 33

The Master of the Bells

It is a Friday afternoon at Alfred and the shadows thicken over the red tile roofs of the college town that bears the name of a Saxon king.

At the stroke of half past four the first mellow note of the bells breaks the quiet of the valley and echoes in the foothills. Villagers, students, professors, farm folk listen and they know that a leaf has been turned in the Book of the Seasons.

Dr. Ray W. Wingate, Alfred University's first and only carillonneur, is playing his first Friday concert of the Fall on the university's famed carillon of 43 bells.

Or putting it another way—up in the cabin of the 73-foot-high steel tower on Pine Hill at the edge of the campus a man of medium build, no longer young in years, but young in spirit and nimble as a matador and quick as a cat, is sweating out as strenuous a half hour as ever did the village blacksmith at his anvil.

To quote Dr. Wingate, "the carillonneur is the Rocky Marciano of the music world." The dictionary states that "a carillon is sounded by manual or pedal action." Which is putting it mildly. A carillon keyboard is a massive thing. And carillon music is made the hard way, without electric or

other synthetic aids as are sometimes used in the playing of chimes.

It was my privilege to watch the Alfred carillonneur in action at his first Fall concert. It was action incarnate.

He pounds, sometimes with all his strength, on the wooden peg-like keys of the big clavier (keyboard) which are attached by wires to the bell cluster above. He bounces about in his seat as he reaches for the keys. He presses his feet down hard and fast on the heavy wooden pedals. He is sweating and puffing just a bit. The unlighted cigar he clenches in his teeth is somewhat frayed.

Such is "a musical Rocky Marciano" in action. Like a champion of the ring, a carillonneur has to have stamina and he must be fast and sure with his hands and feet.

He wears felt pads on each little finger as protection against bruising contact with the keys. Dr. Wingate seldom wears gloves as do some other carillonneurs. In fact he wears as little as possible. On hot days he is likely to doff his shirt. The coolish gray afternoon I watched him perform his muscular musical magic he was clad in a T-shirt, shorts and sandals.

He has to be a mechanic as well as a musician. At 9 on concert mornings he begins tuning his instrument and greasing its many wires. If anything goes wrong, he grabs his tools and ascends to the top of the tower to make repairs.

In the middle of that first concert of the Autumn a pedal suddenly failed to work. Dr. Wingate skipped aloft. A wire had snapped. "It would take too long to fix it," he said. "That means the key of F is gone. I'll have to pitch the rest of the program to a higher key." He did just that.

He is not easily ruffled, this jovial veteran of the clavier who first came to Alfred in 1912, a young teacher of voice.

He is a fascinating conversationalist, is dedicated to his art and devoted to his priceless bells.

In the 17 years that Dr. Wingate has played the Alfred carillon, fewer than 20 persons have been with him in the cabin during concerts and nearly all of them were fellow carillonneurs. So I felt honored by his invitation to watch what he called "his monkeyshines."

My wife and I missed meeting a frequent attendant at recitals. She is a well-known Alfred resident of English lineage and she bounds up the long stairway of the tower faster than the agile carillonneur. Her name is Chega and she is Ray Wingate's English setter pal.

It was in 1937 that the first 35 bells came to Alfred. They had been hidden in the Lowland countries since the first World War. Some of them had been buried. Eighteen of them were cast by the famous Peter Homony in 1674. The others were made in the 17th Century by other noted craftsmen. They are said to be the oldest bells in the United States.

A dream of many years came true when alumni and faculty people raised the funds that brought the ancient carillon across the ocean to the campus in the Allegany hills. The carillon is named the Davis Memorial in honor of Dr. Boothe C. Davis, a venerated president of Alfred, and his wife. Both sleep in the village cemetery now but both were alive when the bells first rang out.

When the carillon was brought to the campus from Alfred Station, college and church bells pealed out a welcome and there was general rejoicing. At last the university had its carillon. But it had no one to play it and no tower to hang it in. Both were soon provided.

President J. Nelson Norwood called the head of the

college music department back to Alfred from his Rhode Island vacation. "Professor Wingate, you've got to play the bells," he said. Vainly the music professor protested that he had never even heard a carillon played. The president said that surely a talented pianist and organist could learn the carillonneur's art.

So Ray Wingate went to Ottawa and to Riverside Church in New York where he studied under masters. He sat beside Henry S. Wesson when that carillonneur played the first public recital on the Davis Carillon. After two months he bravely mounted to the clavier and gave his first concert. He has played hundreds of concerts in the years since then.

Alfred got its carillon tower pronto after Justin Bradley, of Bolivar, a leader in the region's oil and natural gas industry and a former pupil of Professor Wingate, saw the bells on the ground. The next day he sent one of his derrick crews to Alfred and a 70-foot wooden tower, much like an oil derrick, rose swiftly on Pine Hill.

In the Summer of 1954 that was replaced by the present tower of steel made possible through a bequest of the late Mrs. Orra Rogers. Into the new tower went eight additional Flemish bells of modern make, the gift of John P. Herrick of Olean and Los Angeles, a trustee of Alfred University and a veteran oil man.

During a two months' flying visit to 11 European countries, Dr. Wingate, in the tradition of the vacationing busman, spent much of his holiday visiting the famous carillons of the Old World. He got a tremendous thrill out of playing the bells at Utrecht and the set at the world carillon school in Mechelen, Belgium.

He has many memories stored up during his 19 years as master of the bells at Alfred. He played the organ in the

college chapel for Dr. Davis's funeral services, then raced to the tower to sound a dirge on the carillon during the burial rites.

On the afternoon of Dec. 7, 1941, "a date that will live in infamy," he presented a concert in memory of a great Dutch carillonneur, Jef Denyn, who died defending his bells against the Nazis. Dr. Wingate went home after the concert just in time to hear the news from Pearl Harbor.

Another memorable day was when Kamille Lefevre, who plays the world's largest carillon, the 72 bells of New York's Riverside Church, and who had tutored Wingate when the latter was so suddenly drafted into the company of carillonneurs, came to Alfred to receive the honorary degree of doctor of music (an honor earlier accorded Wingate) and to play the Davis Memorial Carillon.

There seems to be a broad field open to muscular young musicians, for Dr. Wingate pointed out there are 81 carillons in the United States and only 32 carillonneurs.

During the Fall and Winter, the Alfred bells ring out on Friday and Sunday afternoons and on Friday and Sunday evenings in the Spring and Summer. They are muted in August when the carillonneur takes his vacation.

He has given many special recitals, for commencement exercises, on holidays and for various campus occasions. He often remembers birthdays of Alfred people with the appropriate number. The villagers hear the "Happy Birthday" music and speculate on whose natal day the bellman is honoring.

The program he played the day I sat beside him included the Alfred Alma Mater, two stately hymns, three pleasant little German melodies, such old favorites as "Now Day Is

Ray Wingate, Alfred's Master of the Bells

Art Kenney, Hobart's Living Legend

Over" and "Loch Lomond," and the American folk song, "The Blue-Tailed Fly."

I thought that Dr. Wingate played with special feeling the majestic "Preludium," composed by Jef Denyn, the Dutch martyr.

And now just as they did in bygone centuries, the ancient bells from the Lowlands are ringing out over the college town of the red tile roofs where so many Seventh Day Baptists keep Saturday as their Sabbath.

The bells give a special flavor to Alfred, one of the most interesting communities in this Upstate land.

Chapter 34

Hobart's Living Legend

Art Kenney is a living Hobart College legend. To Hobart men he is as much a part of the college scene as the ancient stones of Geneva Hall.

The old grads who flocked back in June of 1956 saw a painting of Art in a fancy scarf newly hung in the Student Union Lounge. They also saw him in person at the commencement doings and, in his familiar white coat, serving his famous punch at the receptions on the Hill.

And a few of the old grads gathered as of yore in Art's cluttered little shoe-shining shop on South Exchange Street in downtown Geneva. That shop is a treasure trove of lore and, like its proprietor, a Geneva-Hobart institution.

The old grads may be big shots in their own communities—bankers, industrialists, churchmen—but back in Geneva and the shoe-shine parlor, they are Art's "boys" again and the years are rolled away. Art has known three generations of Hobart men and he is likely to greet a freshman with "I knew your grandfather and your father when they were here." His memory for names and faces is fabulous.

With delight the old grads listen to Art's torrent of reminiscences, punctuated by his wonderful, inimitable laugh, worth a fortune to any radio comedian. Art's is genuine.

They thumb through his "memory book," which he started in 1906 and in which some 1,000 Hobart men, four college presidents among them, have signed their names. They look over the faded football posters and the old pictures on the walls of the little shop and old days live again.

For they will never forget how Art's mighty voice has spurred on the Orange and Purple grid warriors all through this century and how his pep talks at the rouser held on the eve of every big football game had put what he calls "that old Hobart determinashun" into every Hobart heart. "Football," he says, "is one third science, two thirds guts."

Art is in his 77th year, and he is seldom at his establishment afternoons any more. "I feel that maybe I'm goin' the other way," is his concession to the years but his spirit is young and his enthusiasm and affection for the college he never attended but to which he gave his allegiance more than 60 years ago is unchanged.

On the Hill, home of the Colleges of the Seneca, historic Trinity Church and the mansions of the gentry, Art Kenney is a tradition, the recipient of many honors and much affection as Hobart's most loyal booster and its "professor of fightology."

Downtown in the brisk lakeside city he is known as the "mayor of South Exchange Street," catcher of runaway horses in the early days of the horseless carriages, hero of a big fire, the father of barber shop singing, an active participant in all civic campaigns and one of Geneva's best liked and best known citizens.

This Negro bootblack is one of the rare personalities of Upstate New York.

• • •

He was born in Geneva in 1880. His mother died when he was 4. His father, William T. Kenney, ran a draying and express business and Art's first memories of Hobart College are of a boy of nine years holding the horses while his father lugged students' trunks, lamps and other effects into the only two dorms on the campus, Geneva and Trinity Halls. Hobart had only 80 students in those days.

Art's father died when the boy was 13 and after that he helped his brother, Herman, run the carting business. They would gather boxes and lumber for the Moving Up Day "Burning of the Books," a campus tradition long since discarded. Their express wagon would carry posters advertising the college games. Art served as batboy for the college baseball team and provided chairs for spectators at sports events. Thus early in life he became a part of Hobart.

The stocky, powerful figure (in a derby hat in the old days) and the great voice booming out above all others, "Let's go Hobart!" became a tradition at all home football games and at the big game with Rochester, usually staged in the Flower City. Art's rooting, while intense, was always good natured and University of Rochester followers grew to like him and to look for him at the traditional game.

In 1918 Art made his first speech at a pre-game rouser and he has been doing it every since. He has missed only one home game in six decades. That was in 1939 and his wife had just died. The entire Hobart athletic staff signed a message of condolence.

Meanwhile Art had opened a shoe-shining, hat-cleaning parlor in the old waiting room of the Geneva, Seneca Falls & Auburn interurban trolley line in Seneca Street. As "Kenney's Dugout," it became a rendezvous for college students and alumni, as well as townspeople. Professors dropped in, too.

Town and gown mingled happily in that genial atmosphere, dominated by the sparkling personality of the master of the brushes. One of Art's accomplishments was to beat perfect time with his shoe-shining brushes and cloths as he sang the college battle song, "March Men of Hobart."

Forty or more years ago when the girls at William Smith, Hobart's sister college, were forbidden to smoke, they found sanctuary at Art's. He saw nothing wrong with co-eds smoking and in that he had the support of some liberal-minded parents.

In the early days of this century when the noisy new gasoline buggies were beginning to scare the carriage and wagon horses on the Seneca Street hill, Art won his laurels as a catcher of runaways. He perfected his timing so that after racing a while alongside the horses, he would grab the bit at the crucial moment.

For 37 years now he has been in the little shop in South Exchange Street in the rear of the old Geneva National Bank, now a branch of the Lincoln Rochester Trust Company. He has been for years janitor of that bank and another one in the city but admits that nowadays he "mostly just polishes the brass."

The shop, whose window bears the inscription, "Shoes Shined By Art—Hats Blocked," is packed with mementos—and memories.

There are Art's three "war books," which vie with the Hobart "memory book." The first war book is filled with the names of Genevans who served in the 1917–18 conflict. Another lists those who fought in the second World War. In 1951, on his 71st birthday, Art sadly opened his third one—for the Korean War. He has pasted gold stars opposite the names of those who never came back to Geneva, along

with such marginal notations in his own handwriting as "He died for us" and "He was a good boy and a good soldier."

Art has a big drawer full of some 1,000 letters and cards from Hobart grads and Genevans, many of them written from the war zones and the training camps. Often parents came to the shoe-shining shop for word of their sons in service, who had written to Art first of all.

There is a citation on the wall almost anywhere you look. One, signed by the mayor and the fire commissioner of Geneva, commends Art for his work in the downtown Wilson Block fire of February, 1916. He was credited with saving the Regent Theater by fighting the blaze in a vital spot with a broken hose for hours in the bitter cold. And he was not a member of the fire department.

There is a citation from the Geneva Kiwanis Club for his promotion of "good citizenship and good fellowship." Art says "it was the first ever given to a colored person."

He is proud, too, of the testimonial from the Society for the Encouragement and Preservation of Barber Shop Quartets, signed by its national president. Geneva barber shop singers were harmonizing in Art's place long before any society was formed. Art, who can carry tenor, bass or baritone in any foursome, was crowned "king of harmony" by the local SEPBSQ at a surprise birthday party.

He has donated his singing and speaking talents to every fund-raising drive in Geneva.

Art treasures the honorary citation presented him in 1947 by the Hobart Alumni Council as "a Christian gentleman, an exemplary citizen and a Hobart tradition in his own right."

The 1953 college year book, the *Echo of the Seneca,* was

dedicated to Art Kenney with this inscription: "From the punch bowl on Spring Weekend to Boswell Bowl on Fall Weekend, 'Lil Arthur' Kenney has been as much a necessity as the punch or the football. . . ."

In the shop are pictures of many notable people Art has met, including Franklin D. Roosevelt who came to Hobart when he was governor to receive an honorary degree. In his "memory book" are the signatures of Joe Louis and Jim Crowley of Four Horsemen fame.

And in Art's collection of pictures, an older Geneva, the one he knew in his youth, lives again. There are pictures of unpaved streets, of landmarks long since torn down, of the *Otetiani* and other Seneca Lake steamboats that used to dock at the foot of Castle Street, of the local National Guard in camp before the first World War, of old athletic teams and the like.

But in the main Art's pictures and his memories revolve around the 136-year-old college on the Hill. Trinity Church also shares his regard. He joined Trinity's St. Philip's Mission as a child. At a dinner of the Bishop's Men, laymen's organization of the diocese, held in Rochester a few years ago and attended by hundreds, only two men, other than the speaker, were introduced to the assemblage. One was Dr. Alan Brown, then president of Hobart. The other was Art Kenney.

In December of 1955, Art, along with football coach Eddie Tryon, was guest of honor of a dinner of the New York City Alumni at Toots Shors' restaurant. Art made a speech, in which he said:

"I'm getting along now, maybe near the end, and so I made my will. I'm gonna leave $500 to Hobart and $500 to Trinity

Church. These are the best things in my life, Hobart and the church, and I've got to split it up."

He also revealed that if he outlives a sister-in-law, his well-kept, commodious yellow house on High Street near the Geneva High School will be bequeathed to Hobart.

At that dinner Eddie Tryon, the one-time Colgate gridiron great, stepped aside and let Art have the spotlight. The metropolitan newspapers played up the tribute paid by the Hobart grads to a humble bootblack and ran Art's picture.

Actually it was an old story for Art. Back in 1935 he had been honored at a similar alumni dinner in New York, where he was the special guest of one of his "Hobart boys," Dr. Guy Shipler, eminent editor of the *Churchman*.

In 1956 alumni and students raised a fund and commissioned Mrs. Marjorie Cloutier, a part-time instructor at William Smith, to do an oil portrait of Art Kenney. It was hung on Moving Up Day in the Student Union. Art, for the first time, wore academic robes for the presentation ceremony. He recalled that "I'd made some notes with names on 'em but I got all tangled up in the robes and couldn't find 'em when I needed 'em." Then his burly frame shook with that great hearty laugh of his: "Yeh, heh, heh."

You have only to sit in Art's shop a few minutes to find out how popular he is in Geneva. Brisk-stepping business men, well-groomed clubwomen, the rank and file of Geneva, pass by his shop, look in, see the familiar figure, wave and smile. They seem genuinely pleased to see Art back in his store of an afternoon again.

A tall, middle-aged gentleman came in for a shine. He told Art: "I'm just back from England. I saw your picture, the one at the New York dinner, in the London edition of the *Herald-Trib* last Winter." I don't think that man

needed a shine at all. He wanted to see Art and to tell him how his fame had crossed the ocean.

None of his honors has affected Art's hatband. He is something of a showman, it is true, but still one of the most genuine characters you'll meet. At one election he received some write-in votes for alderman of the Fourth Ward. But he is content with his honorary office, that of "mayor of South Exchange Street."

Of all his interests Hobart football is closest to his heart. As a follower of the Orange and Purple, he is no sunshine patriot. He never lost heart during those three winless seasons, 1928–31. And Hobart's 1954 undefeated-untied record sent him into the clouds. "I've been waiting 62 years for this," he exulted. In the window of his shop is a section of the goal post of the last game, signed by the players and inscribed in big letters: "HOBART, 1954—UNDEFEATED."

Art can rattle off the names of all the teams and all the coaches since the 1890s. Didn't he know all of them? Vincent S. "Deac" Welch, longtime coach in the days when the Hobart warriors were "the Deacons," not the "Statesmen," was a close friend.

For 57 years every Fall two words were on every Geneva and Hobart lip: "BEAT ROCHESTER." The traditional game with Rochester, usually played on Thanksgiving Day on the old University Field in the Flower City before there was a River Campus, was for Hobart the Rose Bowl, the Kentucky Derby, the World Series all wrapped into one. Students painted "BEAT ROCHESTER" on interurban trolleys. Some said that even the mysterious lake "guns" that boom out of Seneca's depths took up the refrain. The game was just another one on the schedule for Rochester.

But Hobart teams pointed for it all season and always played inspired football against their old foes.

The Rochester game was the big day of the year for Art Kenney. When the 57-year-old rivalry was abruptly broken off after the 1947 game, he was disconsolate. But he was confident the game would be back on the schedule and, sure enough, gridiron relations were resumed in 1956.

As this is written, Art Kenney is looking forward impatiently to October 6, when the old rivalry will be renewed—on Hobart's Boswell Field. He'll be there at his old place close to the playing field and he'll be roaring out, as in other years: "Let's go, Hobart. You're as good as they are. Sock 'em, Hobart."

And before the game on the afternoon of October 6, an old sign will go up again in the window of the little shoeshining shop that is a veritable Hobart shrine: It reads:

"THE MAYOR OF SOUTH EXCHANGE STREET GONE TO SEE HOBART BEAT ROCHESTER."

Chapter 35

The Hooded Cobra

Outwardly there was nothing sinister about the small flat book I found on my desk when I came to work the other night. Its plain black cover gave no hint of its contents.

But when I opened it, the same feeling came over me that I had experienced when I was trout fishing in my native hills as a boy. I had put my hand down on a fallen tree beside the stream and touched something slimy. It was a horrible sensation. The water snake, a harmless thing, slithered away. But I still remember.

The little black book somebody left on my desk was a reminder of something far more venomous than the snake I had unintentionally caressed so many years ago.

It was a financial record of the Monroe County Knights of the Ku Klux Klan for parts of the years 1926–27. My name was on a piece of paper attached to it. There was a message scribbled in pencil on the inside of the cover: "Who says there wasn't a Klan in Rochester?"

The account book, standard equipment of the Invisible Empire, was the "Klabee's account with Headquarters Klan 385, later designated as Kounty Klan, Realm of New York."

There are names in the little black book, names of several Klabees (disbursing officers) and of many Kligrapps (those

on the receiving end). I am not going to reveal any of the names in the book. Some of them may be fictitious although I know others are not. A quarter of a century has gone by since the last entry was made and some of the Knights who belonged to the names are dead. The others have, I hope, repented of their intolerance and folly.

The little black book brought back memories of one of the darkest chapters of our national life—that sinister period of the 1920s when robed men hid their faces behind masks, met stealthily by night, burned fiery crosses on hilltops and cherished hatred toward their brothers not of their own race or religious belief.

In some places the twisted thinking of the Klan spawned violence, persecution of minorities and other cowardly, bullying Hitlerian tactics.

The Klan was a formidable issue in national politics in its time. Remember the wild sessions of the marathon Democratic National Convention in New York's Madison Square Garden in 1924? It was the Klan issue that stirred that cauldron.

In Western New York the KKK took on more of the aspects of a secret society which gratified an adolescent delight in ritual, pageantry and costume, the more alluring because it met either under the cover of darkness or behind masks.

But at the core it was downright ugly. To carry out the snake analogy, the KKK resembled a hooded cobra.

First public notice of the presence of the Klan in Monroe County came in 1922, seven years after the old Invisible Empire of carpetbagger-reconstruction days in the South had been revived by a smart Georgia promoter. Its peak nationally was reached in 1920 or 1921.

National organizers moved into this area in 1922 and in October of that year there were rumors of a Ku Klux rally held in Spenderport. On Dec. 11, 1922, an organization meeting of the order was held in Rochester, in Malta Hall, 89 Main St. East. Newspaper reporters were barred but were told by "spokesmen" that 250 members had been signed up.

A reporter got into a Klan meeting in the old Reynolds Arcade on the night of Nov. 22, 1923 and listened to an organizer with a Texas accent rant about the Catholic-Jewish menace, defame Governor Al Smith and wind up by passing the hat with a request for $10 donations.

At one phase of its local career, the Klan hired a publicity agent. Most of the time it operated underground and always it concealed the names of its leaders.

Its most open and spectacular demonstration in these parts was on Sept. 25 and 26 of 1926. During those days some 19,000 Klansmen and their women from 10 Western New York counties swarmed in full regalia to a 36-acre field at Washington and Ivy Streets in East Rochester. They called the gathering "the Konvocation of the Seventh Province."

Tents were set up and a hooded guard thrown around the field. Only those who knew the password were admitted. A scheduled night parade through the streets of East Rochester was rained out. That probably was fortunate. There might have been incidents in the industrial village. Instead the Klansmen paraded around the field the next day.

Also they listened to fiery speeches in the daytime and burned three fiery crosses, one of them 50 feet high, at night. They held a "naturalization" ceremony in which scores were admitted into the order.

The two-day mummery tangled traffic in the area, for thousands came to watch the show from a distance, but there was no violence. Western New York saw other Klan field days. There was one in Penn Yan that same year but the East Rochester Konvocation was the biggest.

The Klan was on the decline nationally by the time it reached its zenith in rural Western New York. I was amazed on a 1925 visit to my birthplace in Cattaraugus County to find a lot of Ku Klux sentiment—in a little community which is 99 per cent Nordic Protestant. Three Catholic families and no Jews presented the "menace" in my home town.

The last entry in the little black book which came so mysteriously into my possession is dated July 1, 1927. By that time the murky tide of bigotry was ebbing fast in America.

Along with the Klabee's account book were a number of vouchers, receipts and other Klan papers. Some bore the official emblem, a robed Knight on horseback and carrying a torch.

Among the documents was a form for ordering official robes. Despite the jokes about the Komical Knights stripping their beds for their regalia, they did not wear sheets and pillow cases.

Elaborate "Tri K. Klub Field Supervisor's Robe Reports" were to be forwarded "with remittance to the supervisor on date measurement is taken." A copy of the report was to be sent to "National Headquarters, PO Box 1079, Little Rock, Ark." The robe concession must have been a gold mine for some smart Klansmen.

The papers also included vouchers covering the traveling expenses of the Kounty Kleagle and secretary to a Kon-

klave in Schenectady; a receipt for use of Rochester Post-office Box 788; vouchers for $2 monthly carfare, probably by trolley, for the acting secretary; for office supplies, telephone calls, for pictures of East Rochester field days and a Klansman's funeral. There also was an item of $1.25 for sheet music. What Hymn of Hate was that?

Entries in the book also give evidence of Ku Klux activities in Fairport, Pittsford, Honeoye Falls and Brockport as well as East Rochester, which seems to have been a hotbed of the hooded order.

The Klabee's records reveal no great financial prosperity in 1926–27. The largest balance on hand at any time was $55. The last balance in the little black book which came out of the nowhere was 94 cents.

From the beginning the Ku Klux Klan was bankrupt in decency.

Chapter 36

The Hills of Home

"Who hath desired the sea—the sight of salt water unbounded—
The heave and the halt and the hurl and the crash of the comber wind-bounded?
So and no otherwise—so and no otherwise—the hillmen desire their hills."

Those lines are from Kipling's "The Sea and the Hills." I suppose a host of people "hath desired the sea" but I am not one of them. Mention of "the heave and the halt and the hurl" arouses in this landlubber only a queasy sensation.

But I do know that Rudyard was not writing through his pith helmet when he proclaimed that the heart of the hillman ever remains in the hills of home.

Or put it another way—once a hillbilly always a hillbilly. I was born among the hills and I never go back to them, even for a few hours, without a mighty lift of the spirit, especially in Spring when the hills of home are fresh and green.

To me prairie country is not only monotonous but a bit fearsome. The great stretch of sky seems so limitless and so

far away. The prairie landscape lacks the grace and grandeur of one broken by hills that stand like protecting sentinels and seem to transmit to their people some of their own strength and serenity.

Is it not written in an old, old Book: "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills whence cometh my help?"

Although Rochester lies on a lakeside plain, a fertile and a fruitful one, its people don't have to look far to lift up their eyes unto the hills. There's the rugged Pinnacle range at our southeastern gate. And out Fairport-Egypt way, the Turk Hills rise grandly.

Take almost any southerly road out of the Flower City and you encounter the hills, hills that grow higher with every southward mile. Majestic slopes ring the long blue lakes of Western and Central New York and many of them are covered with vineyards. As wild and unspoiled as some of the Kentucky mountains are the Bristols, whose highest peak, Gannett Hill, towers 2,256 feet above the level of the sea.

So Rochesterians "who desire the hills" have not far to go. My own hill country is out where the counties of Cattaraugus, Wyoming and Allegany rub boundary lines.

The hills out there are not occasional. They are continuous and they are mighty. No vineyards or orchards grow upon their slopes. They are likely to be stony. There "cattle graze upon a thousand hills." They are the foothills of the Alleghenies, and Nature molded them with a bold and lavish hand.

In those hills history has been made. From the towering ridges once blazed the signal fires of the Senecas when all this land was theirs. The white man came and answered the challenge of the hills. He built his roads along the narrow

Indian trails through the forest and over the heights. He cleared the land and reared his cabins, even on the highest peaks. He even built a canal all the way from Rochester to Olean, inching it through the stony uplands by hand labor. And there is no more epic chapter in the saga of America than the building of the Erie Railroad bit by bit a century ago through the formidable hills of the Southern Tier.

On the way from Rochester to the hills of home remain marks of the pioneers' conquest. Between Nunda and Portageville still stand the stone walls and the locks that the builders of the Genesee Valley Canal put there when, without benefit of machinery more than 100 years ago, they dug "the Deep Cut" through the rocky hills.

Along the road back home also is Letchworth Park with all its natural splendor of waterfalls, woodlands and a gorge so magnificent that it has been called "The Grand Canyon of the East." Do you know of any Grand Canyon in prairie country?

My native village of Sandusky which nestles among the Cattaraugus hills is just a little place and not particularly historic although the last survivor of the Revolution, Daniel Frederick Bakeman (1760–1869), is buried there.

When I was a boy, I never thought its setting especially picturesque and I accepted the hills rising above either side of the village as part of the order of things, like the two-room schoolhouse and the mill dam under the willows.

Later on when I went away and became bored with flat country, I would close my eyes and see again the hills of home, particularly the wooded height west of the village which we boys knew only as Ben Holmes' sugar bush. There never was a more beautiful maple grove anywhere. It stood

like a crown on its hill, perfect in its symmetry. I always looked for that grove whenever I went back home.

Now it has been despoiled. The best of the fine old trees have been cut down and the grove is irregular and scraggly. To me it seemed a wanton act—as if a bomb had wrecked the Taj Mahal or a knife had slashed the Mona Lisa.

Nothing is sacred any more—not even the hills of home.

Chapter 37

"Henpeck"–Boyhood Days

Unless you were born in a small town you probably won't be interested in this piece.

I don't mean a big village, a veritable little city, like Newark or Penn Yan either. I mean a real little place with a two-room schoolhouse, too small to have its own high school, one of those sleepy burgs you whizz right through when touring, hardly bothering to read the name on the road marker.

The other week end I made a pilgrimage to one of those little places. It happens to be the one in which I was born and raised.

More than a century ago a rival community dubbed my native village "Henpeck" and the nickname has stuck. The real name is Sandusky–and it's not the one in Ohio.

Sandusky, Cattaraugus County, New York, is no one-street town. No, indeed. There are two streets, Main and Eagle, the latter so named because it leads over the hills to the village of Eagle, just over the line in Wyoming County.

I never go back there nowadays without a proper sense of humility. For I can't forget the time several years ago when I went back in a very cocky mood. I have just been elevated to the dizzy heights of an assistant city editorship of a newspaper and, besides, I was writing a column that long since

has been happily forgotten. But at that time I expected the natives to be impressed.

One of the first natives I met was Will Edwards. He was known as "Will Free," to distinguish him from the other William Edwardses in the neighborhood. His wife was a Free Methodist, hence the nickname "Will Free."

There were many Welsh thereabouts, emigrants who came in the 1840s and 1850s and their descendants. The Welsh run to a multiplicity of names. There were nearly a dozen John Joneses and William Williamses. To tell them apart, they were called by their middle initial or by some other distinctive nickname. For instance, the Tommy Williams who had worked in the oil country was "Tommy O" for oil. I remember also "David Leggins" Williams, "John Apostle" Evans, "Bloody Bill" Thomas, "Tom the Painter" Jones, "Tommy Poet" James among the more unusual monickers. One man, notoriously under the thumb of his wife, was called "Dick She."

"Will Free" Edwards was a little man with a big mustache. He was a wagonmaker but politics was his real forte. No matter who was town boss, Will was first lieutenant. He did the backstage work. He never held office but served his party for sheer love of intrigue. Of course he was a Republican. There were hardly enough Democrats in the Township of Freedom to man a ticket in the elections. Will seldom spoke above a whisper and often behind his hand.

This was the man who greeted me with: "Well, I hear you're in Rochester now. I was there once, on the Pea Pickers' excursion. You're a printer, hey?"

I tried to explain the importance of my editorial position but "Will Free" brushed off my explanation with:

"Arch, you were a danged fool to go to the city. If you had stayed here, I would have made you town clerk."

Every year Henpeck seems to shrink a little more. So many of the old buildings have been torn down and never are any new ones built to replace them. Gone is the ancient rambling Beebe Block, relic of a former prosperity, with its curious third-floor hall called, because of its shape, "The Gun Barrel." Gone are Hayden's woolen mills and office fronting the village green. Years ago "Hayden's flannels" were famous throughout the state.

The village green really wasn't large enough for a baseball diamond but when I was a kid, we played teams from Arcade, Farmersville Station, Rushford and Centerville there many a time.

The shortstop stood squarely in the middle of Main Street, then unpaved. There were no automobiles and when a horse and buggy or farm wagon came along, "time" was called until the dust settled. A couple of telephone poles in the middle of the "diamond" added an element of uncertainty. The left fielder was stationed on the lawn of the Baptist Church. Sometimes windows of the houses on the green were shattered but a kind providence protected the costly stained glass of the Baptist Church.

The green was the kids' ball park. The "town team" played on a reconverted meadow or pasture, and sometimes on a "peeled" diamond at Crystal Lake, a resort four miles distant. As a player on the town team, I have performed in pastures where only too obviously cattle had recently grazed and, I think it was at Curriers, in a field which had a two-foot stone wall between center field and home plate.

Mostly widows and spinsters lived in the old houses on the village green. I remember the first money I ever earned

was by selling them cowslips I had gathered from Harry Beebe's swamp. Or maybe it was from pulling mustard out of half-mile long rows of Cal Haskell's corn field—at one cent a row.

Gone are the "setters" who used to camp on the steps of my father's general store—in the mornings. When the sun shifted in the afternoon, they moved to the porch of Jim Griffith's store across the street. I found my old men again, in the cemetery on the hill, now only names on headstones.

I remember when the railroad came to Henpeck. It was a thrill to watch the timing of the men who laid the rails and spiked them down. Our railroad, the Buffalo & Susquehanna, did not last long. But the village was lively when it was being built.

One Saturday night I missed supper to watch a steam shovel rip through a gravel bank. My dad came after me and I am sure it was the supreme humiliation of my life when he marched me down Main Street past the crowd of "setters," one hand firmly grasping my right ear.

And there was the time when, home on vacation from Buffalo where I was going to school, I was sent to bring home the family cow from pasture to be milked. It had been several months since I had seen the animal. In the city one does not think much about cows. I shall never forget the look of disgust that came over my father's face when I returned from the pasture and how he snapped out:

"What in hell do I want with Dominick Peters's cow?"

Theodore Hayden, owner of the woolen mill and then a state member of Assembly, witnessed the incident and solemnly told me:

"Never run for public office. As long as you live they will remember that you did not know your own cow!"

So many memories. There was the time I was sent all over town in quest of a left-hand monkey wrench; Halloween nights when we boys used to overturn sundry outhouses; church "donations" when tables groaned under home-made beans, potato salad, angel food cakes; "sugar socials" when you poured hot maple syrup into a pan of snow to make delicious "wax."

The little brook still sings beside the tall Victorian house with the peaked gables that once I knew as home. Since those days I have explored the source of the Genesee River but I never did find the beginning of that little brook, somewhere back in the hills. I would follow it as far as Ben Holmes' gully. There I always turned back. There was a legend that once stolen horses were hidden there. It was a dark and fearsome place for a small boy, even one armed with a brave sword of tin, bearing the magic name, "Admiral Dewey."

* * *

Until the horseless carriage and the paved highways opened new vistas, Henpeck lived pretty much to itself in its niche among the hills.

The economy of that countryside was—and is—largely based on dairying and the price of milk. Only the creek bottoms are fertile. The hill land is stony.

Once there was a cheese factory at almost every crossroads. To them every morning the farmers hauled their cans of milk in wagons or sleighs and over unpaved roads. They took the cans home filled with whey for the pigs.

At least a dozen factories in the neighborhood belonged to Henpeck's "cheese king." His name was Jerome Bonaparte Lewis and they called him "Old Boney," but not to his

face. He was a figure right out of the Old Testament with a long white beard.

For half a century he dealt fairly with the farmers. Then a big milk combine built a plant in nearby Arcade and offered the dairymen higher prices for their milk. The fickle farmers deserted "Old Boney" and the little cheese factories closed, one by one. The old cheese king chose to fight the milk trust rather than sell. So now all the milk of the region goes to the big plant in Arcade, in trucks and over paved highways.

When I was a boy in Henpeck, there was no such thing as unemployment and welfare meant "well being," not the dole. Men could get work in Summer on the highway gang or hire out to farmers. In the Winter there was the ice harvest at Crystal Lake. Or a fellow could make a living cutting wood or running a line of traps.

The supreme ignominy was "going on the town" and elderly folks lived in the dread of having to end their days in the "Poor House" or "County House" at Machias.

There were no class distinctions. Everybody was called by his given name. The minister was "Elder." Many a farmer kept the same hired man for years. Occasionally a hired man would run away with his boss's wife. Usually the hired man was young and handsome and the wife neglected. Only a few village families could afford the luxury of a "hired girl." The word maid was never used. The hired girl was treated as one of the family and ate at the table with them.

Looking back, it seems to me there was a lively social life in the village. There was no radio, no television, and the nearest movie, which began showing the silent pictures around 1908, was in Arcade, three dirt-road miles away.

There were many young people in the community. The

call of the cities was not so strong then. There were rounds of church suppers, home talent plays, corn roasts, sugaring-off parties, sleigh rides and hay rides.

Much of the village's social life revolved about the two churches, the Baptist and the Methodist. But there also was an unorganized poolroom set and some two-day and three-night poker sessions in a smoke-filled room of the Sandusky House.

Henpeck always voted "no license." But some of her citizens were not teetotalers. Many a man who voted "dry" had a barrel or two of hard cider in his cellar. Others, who lived blameless lives at home, would partake of the fleshpots in the Babylon that was the roaring city of Buffalo, 45 miles away. Some rode the B&S trains to nearer oases along the line, such as Sardinia and Springville.

The railroad "deepo" on the hill was a sort of social center for the townsfolk. On Sunday afternoons when the hands of the clock in the little office of the ticket agent-telegrapher-freight agent-baggage master-mail pouch handler pointed to 5:23, it seemed all Henpeck was assembled in the waiting room and outside the station. Few of them were taking the train or even meeting anyone. They had come for the most dramatic event of the week in the village —the arrival and departure of the 5:23, which consisted of two coaches, one a combination baggage-mail car and smoker.

Long ago the B&S tracks were ripped up and the depot was moved off the hill to be remodeled into a residence. But on Sunday afternoons in memory I often meet the 5:23.

All in all, people in those days seemed to have a pretty good time without recourse to synthetic entertainment. They sort of made their own good times.

The first World War, along with the speed craze and the

new gadgets, changed all that. The automobile doomed the hay rides and the sleigh rides—and the parlor sofa knew its young lovers no more. Young couples no longer strolled to the Wintergreen Swamp on Sunday afternoons. The open road and the tin Lizzies claimed them.

In pre-radio days, the villagers relied solely on their newspapers for information on current affairs. They had to wait until the mail train brought the *Buffalo Evening News* to find out that Wilson had edged out Hughes for the Presidency and that Jack Johnson had dethroned the old champ, Jeffries.

Henpeck had no public library. The popular fiction of my boyhood were the works of Harold Bell Wright and Myrtle Reed. Of course there were the Henty and Alger sagas and the staid *Youth's Companion,* offset by Nick Carter. My grandmother doted on the sickish novels of Mary Jane Holmes and Augusta J. Evans. Religious folks read the *Christian Herald* religiously. Other folks read the *Pennsylvania Grit,* a sensational and incredible weekly. The more literate matrons and old maids formed a reading or study group called the Emanon Club. (Emanon is "no name" spelled backward.) It met at the home of members and was more of a clearing house for gossip than culture. Many sessions began and ended with "they say . . ."

The cultural highlight of the year came in the Summer when the brown tents of the traveling Chautauqua were pitched on the high school grounds in Arcade and the welkin rang to the oratorical thunder of William Jennings Bryan and Dr. Russell H. Conwell and the music of the Swiss Bellringers and Gilbert and Sullivan.

Winter brought revival meetings and hellfire and brimstone exhortations raised the emotional pitch for a little

while. And there were occasional traveling minstrel shows, medicine shows and Uncle Tom shows, either in a hall or in a tent on the green. At one of those shows, a newcomer to the village, a Hollander who worked in the saw mill, found the sister he had not seen in 25 years, playing both Little Eva and Eliza, besides selling tickets. He wanted her to stay in Henpeck but she went on with the show.

* * *

The winds of March always waft sweet memories to me. In my mind's eye I see again the farmers' wagons slogging through the mud or their sleighs buffeting the drifts to unload their golden cargoes at our general store in Henpeck, until the cans of maple syrup crowd every available inch of floor space and the cakes of maple sugar are piled high upon the counters.

In those days nearly every farmer had a "sugar bush" and the maple syrup industry flourished in the Wyoming and Cattaraugus County foothills. It still does, but on a greatly diminished scale.

The sugaring season always brought a bustle to our general store. In early February the farmers would come in for their syrup cans, sap buckets, spouts, tapping bits and other paraphernalia. Then after the soft wet flakes of the first "sugar snow" had fallen, they'd start tapping the maples.

As the sun climbed and as its rays grew steadily warmer and the nights became clear and crisp, the harvest would begin—the pouring of the sap from the buckets into large containers, hauled on a sled or stone boat to the sugar houses, where wood fire blazes under the evaporators and clouds of steam billow forth. All of which culminated in the

rows of cans of syrup and piles of sugar cakes in the general store.

And there were the "sugaring off parties" and the taste of "wax," which is maple syrup after it is poured on snow, lingers in memory. One had the choice of a pan of snow for "wax" or a dish of syrup to stir—and it took some stirring—into maple sugar.

Two older brothers of mine used to sample every farmer's syrup brought to the store, to determine the price to be paid for it. That involved pouring off a little of the syrup on to a piece of paper and tasting it for flavor. Doing that all day would satiate any "sweet tooth."

The quality of the maple sugar was determined by its looks, not its taste. If it was too white, the farmer was suspected of having mixed it with granulated sugar which was cheap in those days. If it was too dark, probably it had a high content of rain water.

Through the years a merchant got to know who made the good stuff and who were careless—or cheated.

Our store never paid cash for maple products or any other kind of produce. The farmer "took it out in trade." For any balance due him he'd get "produce tickets," good for future merchandise.

Every little community was on the whole self-sufficient and its general stores supplied most of its wants. That was before the era of the automobile, the paved highway, the chain store and the mail order catalogue.

Our store really was *general.* We kept everything from barbed wire to baby ribbon, from sheep dip to safety pins, from whetstones to oil of wintergreen.

Farm families who lived on the back roads, Hog Hollow, Dummy Hill, Sand Bank, County Line or over in the Lost

Nation, got to town only about once a week. Hence their orders were generally large and diversified.

Here is an example: First you would fill Farmer Jones's five-gallon can with kerosene oil in an unheated side room. Then you'd purge your hands of kerosene because the next item was 10 yards of outing flannel. People made their own night gowns then. The store shelves were lined with bolts of percale, gingham, calico, denim and other dress goods.

Next on the customer's list was a pound of salt pork. That involved going down cellar to fish out of a brine-filled barrel a hunk of pork of the right size and with a streak of lean in it. If you happened to have a sore on your paw, the salt did not help any. Then a matter of washing one's hands again, for the farmer's lady had decided on a pair of buttoned shoes, some black cotton stockings and some wall paper for the back bedroom.

Mr. Jones wanted a pair of felt boots and that meant another trip to the cellar. Should he wish a jumper, we'd go to the second floor. If he craved a pound of tenpenny nails, a horse collar or a dung fork, we'd cross the street, maybe in a blizzard, to the hardware department. If timothy or clover seed were on the list, they were kept in a rear shed.

Many groceries came in bulk, notably crackers, brown sugar and oat flakes. Coffee was ground by hand. Most housewives made their own bread and many a farmer would swap his syrup and eggs for flour in 50 and 100 pound sacks. We also stocked such now obsolete items as lamp chimneys, lantern globes, buggy whips, buffalo robes, celluloid collars, hat pins, hair receivers and chamber pots.

Our store handled drugs and patent medicines, too. Many a customer who voted "dry" and never would be seen in the barroom of the Sandusky House down the street, would take

home a bottle of bitters for a "tonic," possibly without knowledge of the high alcoholic content.

The farmer was likely to wind up his trading by ordering a package of scrap or a plug of chewin' or maybe a pound bag of Corn Cake smokin' with a free corn cob pipe.

For years the village postoffice was in our store. My father was postmaster during the terms of Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, Harrison, McKinley, Roosevelt I and Taft. We lost the postoffice when twice Grover Cleveland won the Presidency. It went to a rival merchant down the street. And when Wilson was elected in 1912, we said good bye to the postoffice for keeps.

The postoffice was supposed to help trade. In retrospect it seems only to have filled the store at mail time with tobacco-chewing, wise-cracking villagers, to the acute discomfort of the more refined women shoppers.

Sorting the mail was part of the job of some of the store clerks. A clerk in a rural general store had to be versatile. That I was not. After my father had watched me dump a couple of flatirons into a basket of crockery with shattering effect, he muttered something about "a bull in china shop" and relegated me to his warehouse along the Buffalo & Susquehanna tracks. There I handled such non-fragile commodities as cement, plaster, shingles, feed, tile, fertilizer and coal.

All that was long ago. The general store has changed. Even the wide front porch on which the old men would squat, spit and spin their yarns, is gone. Now there's a streamlined store front, flush to the sidewalk. But the name Merrill is still on the sign, just as it has been for more than 75 years.

The "drummers" were my idols when I was young. One

of my jobs was to haul their trunks in a one-horse wagon from the depot to the store where they were unloaded on the front porch. A drygoods salesman might have as many as seven big trunks and sometimes he would spend a couple of days, displaying his wares. Some traveling men rode in state in livery rigs from Arcade and Franklinville.

Now the drummers are an almost extinct tribe. Nearly all the goods are brought in by truck. Gone are the bolts of cloth from the shelves, the bags of flour from the second floor. Nobody makes their own clothes or bread any more. The cracker barrel, the scoop and the coffee grinder are museum pieces.

The main roads that were quagmires in the Spring now are paved and smooth and over them the families from Dummy Hill and Hog Hollow can shoot by in their autos to the bigger villages, even to Buffalo, in a matter of minutes. The RFD boxes are choked with catalogues and the cash register of the chain store is loud in the land.

The general store, like the old gray mare, ain't what it used to be.

Somehow those oldtime drummers stand out in my memory. What rare fellows they were, with their worldly city wisdom, their jaunty assurance, their glib bonhomie, their cigars, their derbies, their patent leather shoes cocked on the rail of the hotel veranda, their lordly livery rigs, their ways with the girls.

How a shy, gawky country lad envied them their aplomb and hoped some day to achieve their pinnacle of sophistication.

It has been many a year since I have weighed out a pound of lard or measured a yard of sheeting but I feel I have fallen far short of that boyhood goal.

Continued from front flap

is the author's affection for Rochester, "the old mill town on the Genesee," and for its many-sided, legend-haunted countryside that he knows so well.

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